INVITATION TO RENAISSANCE ITALY

Invitation to Renaissance Italy

Photo by Alinari

HEAD OF SAINT ANNE

From Leonardo's "Saint Anne and the Virgin"

(Louvre)

Invitation to Renaissance Italy

By

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"Poems (1904)," "Rose and Vine," "The Hours of Fiammetta,"
"The End of Fiammetta," "Leonardo the Florentine."

With a Preface by

Gilbert Murray

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Preface

I saw, and wondered at, this book before it was finished, several years ago. Circumstances prevented its completion at the time; after that came wars and other obstacles; and it is with real pleasure that I now see it complete and printed.

It is a good book as well as a startling one. However seriously one may disagree with it, or even at times resent it, it has worth, because it is based on real knowledge, conceived with real feeling, and expressed with rich and often exquisite power of language. The descriptions, also, both of people and of movements, are full of vividness and understanding. We have heard often enough of the Renaissance as an age of melodrama and villainy, but this book makes us see with new intensity the light-bearers who were neither melodramatic nor villainous, but men of *virtù* and therefore interesting: such, for instance, as Vittorio da Feltre among the children at La Giocosa, or the school of educators whose aim lay in "communicating to youth the beauty of the past"; or, most characteristic of all, the people of Castiglione's *Courtier,* a group which might have walked out of the pages of Plutarch or St. Augustine, seekers by the lamp of Plato for that unattainable perfection which should at last give peace to the soul. Even the occasional judgments which slip out, as in most live books, upon subjects too large to be told the truth about, are often illuminating in themselves as well as useful for the light they throw on the author's own bias of temperament. "Freedom, that beau-

tiful chimera for ever preying on the heart of a humanity that carries slavery in the pulses of its blood." Is that true? There is at least enough unrecognised truth in it to make the saying of it a good act. "Those absolute values of passionate experience which are the only excuse for the infinite and intolerable anguish of existence." If not true, that is perhaps the most noble of dangerous heresies, and one in which the author seems consistently sincere.

The great difference between an artistic criticism and a practical judgment is fairly plain. In the practical judgment what matters is the result: if you hang the right man, drink the right medicine, take the right turning, the judgment is, in practice, satisfactory. It does not much matter whether or no you fully appreciate the motives of the various men you do not hang, the subtle and exquisite properties of all the wrong medicines which you reject, or the charms of the scenery on the many misleading bypaths. You have to decide right, not to appreciate. But in artistic or creative criticism the important thing is not so much to decide right as to see, to understand, to find joy and beauty and inspiration, and, of course, to enable others to do the same.

It follows, no doubt, that good artistic criticism, or at any rate that criticism which deserves to be called creative, is nearly always biased. Not because the artist is indifferent to truth, but because, in order fully to appreciate his subject and extract from it all the meaning he can find, he had to throw himself into it without reserve. He cannot afford to keep checking his impulses or questioning and damping his enthusiasms. Certainly I cannot promise that a reader will find in this volume the white

light of impersonal judgment, or that the right man will always be hanged. Every sentence has passed through the medium of a strong and sensitive personality, which sometimes may distort, as it undoubtedly penetrates and reveals. I can imagine a study of the Renaissance which might be based, as this is, on sound and exact learning, and yet might contradict this book in most of its philosophical estimates. There is a view to which the Renaissance is in its essence an age without aim and without religion—an age whose taste was peculiarly unhellenic, whose rebirth had in it from the very start the seed of corruption, whose learning ran quickly toward pedantry and bombast, which peopled the courts of Italy with precocious and dissipated young men with the manners of Ballarat corner-boys. To such a view the Renaissance, in its pride of artistic achievement, seems rather like another Nero exclaiming in an ecstasy of self-admiration, "Qualis artifex pereo!" imagining, poor man, that he was an exceptionally good artist when we happen to know that he was a very bad one.

Mrs. Taylor does not waste time on arguing down the misconceptions, or persuading away the prejudices of critics who feel like that. And indeed it is not her business: her business is to describe what, with the help of much patient and exact study, her keen imagination has seen in the Renaissance. For, after all, the book is, through and through, the work of a poet, and has to be judged, like a poem or a Platonic rhapsody, by the beauty which it discovers or creates.

1923. G. M.

Introduction

I

More years ago than I care to count, in the dim and different world before the War, it was my privilege one afternoon to walk by a quiet Oxford canal with the distinguished translator of the *Bacchae*. If I so describe the brilliant and versatile Professor Gilbert Murray, it is simply because the more lyric and rebellious side of his genius explains what interest he took in my work. The Italian Renaissance was then to me one of several historic regions where a spirit deeply committed to poetry could escape from bitter constraints of circumstance to ride at will; and that I, a shy person, contrived to tell the story of Sigismondo Malatesta to the apologist of Prohibition and the apostle of the League of Nations now seems to myself slightly incredible. I did not go into details, like Pope Pius II; and, as I said, it was to the translator of the *Bacchae* that I spoke.

The consequence was that Professor Gilbert Murray became not so indirectly responsible for a book called "Aspects of the Italian Renaissance," which he regarded with great amiability and a little disquiet, and so for its adventurous sequel, "Leonardo the Florentine," which he has regarded still amiably, though with more disquiet. It is true that we agree only in fundamentals; but now that he has confessed in the pages of "Harper's" that his criterion of behaviour is an aesthetic value, it is hard to discover where we begin to differ.

Introduction

The first version of this book, after a surprising series of accidents, was long abandoned by me before it was concluded. When it was at last completed, Professor Murray out of his kindness supplied a Preface, in which he sweetly suborned my presentation by calling it "a Platonic rhapsody." With this charming phrase I was exceedingly pleased till I found that no reviewer could refrain not only from quoting it but from misunderstanding it. Some of my critics took it, strangely enough, as a suggestion of inaccuracy, though I had in no way departed from facts, and though I had steadily indicated that the high lights cast black shadows. The Italian Renaissance is an exciting period, and can be truthfully conveyed only with some sincere imaginative excitement. Periclean Athens was not all composed of the pillared Parthenon, the reticent beauty of the Riders' frieze, the breath of violets, the noble mysticism of the *Phaedrus*, the high measures of the Tragic Chorus, the sense of *sophrosyne*. Florence was not all expressed in the Dome, the Campanile, the springtide sorrow and sweetness of Botticelli, the suave and subtle magnificence of Lorenzo, the lute-playing of the young Leonardo, the classic-romantic grace of the Pazzi chapel, the fair young heads bowed in platonic studies in the lamplight. Still, in describing a period as in describing a person, it is right to dwell on essential beauty, though unjust to omit the violences and follies of physical phenomena. In times of great vitality, good and evil thrive together. But a positive evil is only energy gone wrong. It is the negative evil, cold and hard, of exhausted eras that weighs down the soul.

II

My book, however, was kindly received. It was limited in scope, limited in length, for it was intended merely to invite, even to provoke, attention to a climax in European history which, partly by some confusion of terms and dates, has been distinctly misconceived. Written with an anxious desire for veracity, it is primarily interested in the Italian Renaissance as a demonstration of humanity at its best and its worst. A certain criticism of life is probably latent in the chapters, like blood and nerves. I hope so, though the sympathetic system is not so complete as in "Leonardo the Florentine." For I cannot believe that history made with hot blood and vibrating minds can be set down fairly in cold blood and desiccated judgment. The figures of the past are not images of dust: we live and love and die differently because of them. A living sense of the past is part of humanism; a knowledge that will not correlate past and present is only pedantry.

Today the Renaissance is out of fashion in Britain. That period is a reproach to an age of exhaustion. Writing men especially despair of life: they are still charred from the fierce contacts of war. Burnt children, they dread all fire, though flamelessness, or Accidia, is still a mortal sin. With intricate humour, with daring novelties of manner, sometimes with ugly subterfuge of sadism, often with touching Pierrot graces, they confess in the Novel all the impotences and rages of the inferiority complex. (Useful term!) Yet their candour is disarming, their style frequently so much more gallant than their

matter. They will pass through the nadir of night to a new Renaissance morning.

Why Renaissance history is so much more relished in America would be an attractive subject of debate. Not having been there, I see as in a glass darkly. But whatever criticism be levelled against that vast and various country, it cannot be accused of a lack of vitality. It frequently yields instances of Italian "magnificence." It is perhaps young enough and generous enough not to be jealous of past achievement; and detached enough to observe that all new developments in art and life begun in some rapture about the remoter past, a rapture that refuses imitation and sweeps into emulation.

III

In revising, and, at the publishers' request, adding to this volume, now issued under a more expressive name, I find it impossible to remove all the imperfections without pulling its structure to pieces altogether, and destroying the original intention. A few passages in which the author, suddenly remembering her duty to beginners, shows a pathetic desire, crossed with a flash of impatience, to impart a little elementary information, retain their faint air of absurdity. I have suppressed a few of the "obiter dicta" that annoyed certain readers, some because they are no longer applicable, time having both justified and cancelled them, some because they now seem too emphatic, though their significance probably reappears elsewhere. Many new passages have been inserted, and an additional chapter endeavours to knot up some loose ends in a kind of epilogue of the Renaissance.

But I have not wished to qualify that early and candid pleasure in the Return of the Gods from their long exile to the idolatrous land that remembered them best. Yet the Return of the Gods was only part of the Renaissance after all. In its rage of curiosity was the beginning of Science. At present it seems fashionable to reproach this period for its work of "secularisation," as if the secular activities of life had not been in frequent conflict with sacred authority before. When the Earth fell from her pride of place in the security of the harmonious spheres to become a bright mote whirling round the Sun, when intelligences like Leonardo's and Galileo's ventured unafraid into the star-powdered unthinkable spaces, then the vision of Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, shrivelled like a missal in a flame, though it persisted as a psychical and symbolic reality. Reformation and counter-reformation alike could not by cruelties and repressions restrain the mystics from divining an infinite incomprehensible God, beyond all doctrinal description, or the intellectuals from finding austere repose in a melancholy imaginative agnosticism which truly bred the admirable virtue of tolerance. Though the great Catholic Church has retained its prestige because it is older than Christianity, and inexhaustibly wise in the needs of the soul, it now can but comfort—it cannot administer—a world whose mystery of anguish exceeds its interpretation. But the spiritual pride of the Renaissance has, through dreary phases enough, provided man with courage before the infinite. This little clot of burning dust, the suffering human heart, is more inexplicable than the Milky Way. This mysterious mortal mind, so vulnerably housed, refuses to fail before the idea of the ultimate disintegration of

Earth when, a snow of scintillating atoms, she drifts down the solar gulfs. Indeed, so aware of the long intensities of its immaterial history is our imagination that it seems as if this lovely desperate planet, this little castle of fire and wind and water, shaped like a star, must in vanishing leave on the quivering ether some fiery ghostly imprint of its shape of passion and beauty.

May, 1930 Rachel Annand Taylor.

Invitation to Renaissance Italy

The Opened Tomb (1485)

Like ivory incorruptible
The Roman virgin lay,
When the Lombard folk on her slumber broke
That strange Renaissance day.
Like pure immortal ivory
The gracious lady lay.

Her yellow hair was bound with gems
And filleted with green.
For Love long-dead had wreathed her head
And clothed her like a queen.
Great jewels zoned her joyous hair
Above the fillet green.

So Death had ravished her to please
His mournful burning eyes
From some past Spring. Oh! Marvelling
All men with tears and sighs
Bewailed that Death should feed on her
His burning mournful eyes.

Their souls like bridal torches blazed
Around her beauty white.
But the Pope said: "Let her be dead:
Yea, give her back to Night!
Those pagan torches insolent
Confound God's altar-light."

CHAPTER I

The Mediæval Dream and the Renaissance Morning

(a) *Mediævalism*

1

Dubiously and gorgeously, around the year 1485, life, as it is understood by modern minds and senses, begins again. Most readers of history are conscious of a break in the continuity of human psychology between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries. They are vaguely aware that for them the morning would smell sweet and the strife be intelligible in Cinquecento Florence, but that the day in Gothic Paris would pass like a grotesque and beautiful hallucination. The errors of Lodovico Sforza are more explicable to the twentieth century than the beatitudes of Saint Louis, and the heavy despair of Michelangelo's *Dawn* is less disquieting than the sweet archaic smile of a hallowed lady on Rheims Cathedral. That ethereal passion of the mediæval mystic, rising on burning pinions of symbolism from a strange mire of brutality to the ecstasy of union with the Divine, that web of scholasticism woven so closely round assumptions once the solid Realities of belief, are really less familiar to a thinker of this time than the spirit of antique Greece or Rome.

Not that the dominating mood of an age is temporal

in its essence. It is subsumed by another, and another, but persists obstinately in the remembrance of humanity. Mediæval folk there are still, just as vivid as any of their contemporaries, continuing the tradition of the spiritual ardour that wrought the "dark ages" of angry confusion into the intricate story of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These comprehend easily the sick longing, the dreadful sincerity, the enigmatic union of subtlety and candour in the soul of the Middle Ages. Theirs is the secret intensity, the burning concentration, that meditated the stained glass, the carven ivories and ebonies and pearl, the lovely chimerical cathedrals, the flower-plotted missals, the rosy and turquoise tapestries, the choral singing, the scholastic philosophy, and the doctrine of mystical and romantic love—all the arts wherein patience is indeed one with passion. It does not disturb them that this vexed world, rent asunder betwixt Emperor and Pope, should present so equably the ascetic of Christ and the anchorite of earthly love. They understand that the *Imitation of Christ* may thrive with the Saturnalia of the Boy Bishop and the Feast of Fools, Aucassin of Beaucaire with Petit Jehan de Saintré, all the gilded and blazoned symbolism of chivalry with the frank animalism of the fabliaux, Pastoureaux and Jacquerie with quiet peasants and powerful craftsmen, that Saint Louis may have Charles of Anjou to brother, and Jeanne d'Arc number Gilles de Rais among her captains, that you may prove out of Froissart the complete indifference of great knights and courteous ladies to the suffering of the serf, and out of Chaucer the perfect good-fellowship of noble and miller, that the Templars become the Squires of Pride and the first Franciscans the *jongleurs* of Humility, that

Europe may weep over the dead Christ captive in Heathenesse, yet turn aside from the road of redemption to raze the sacred defences of Byzantium, and that, finally, the Age of Faith may throb through and through with fervent heresies. They know that this was the reign of the Idea of Love, and therefore of Hate and all its cruelties—Love with all its antitypes, its maladies and wrongs, its quivering penumbra of wrath and fear.

II

For mediævalism is apprehended, not by intellectual processes, but by intuitions and hints of dreamlike experience, by that dark unconscious logic of the emotions which reconciles the antinomies of the world behind the reason, mysterious wrack of the wisdom of sense and feeling, dim subsoil of immemorial antiquities, unhallowed, monstrous, yet stuff of unimaginable richness, whence the serenest and loftiest forms of art and philosophy rise slowly like great lilies, while the goblin fungi race in growth, although those are yet more deeply rooted in that clay than these.

Exhausted from the rape of Greece and Rome, the barbarian races, strange fevers in their veins, sank into a heavy dream, whence images of intoxicated beauty grew sumptuous and fierce. For from the "True Vine" the world had drunken anew of that Asiatic potion, mixed of life and death, which brings the soul, sick of formalisms, through infinite confusion, and the dark return to primal things, through frenzy and trance, to the dews and wonder of the morning. The Middle Ages, although they work themselves over with the minute consistent doctrine

of the schoolmen, and concentrate, like most women and all dreaming children, on inventories and controversies of material affairs, although they present the anxious doctrine of Thomas Aquinas and the careful account of the Yearbooks, yet live by the great unreasonable doctrine of ecstasy, by the eternal earth-rapture covered by the Dionysiac myth, and the mystery of the Mass, and music, and love, and faith. From this dim dream the pride of the Renaissance intellect might spring. The stock shrank again, outwearied, into arts, philosophies, policies, all sere and ineffective, into a barren rationalism, which yet reposed, disciplined, prepared, till the ancient sap began to rise anew, and the rod blossomed into Revolution and Romance.

The strangeness of mediævalism is an Eastern strangeness, bred of a Syrian religion, quickened by shock upon shock of conflict with the Orient itself. Asia again and again has given to Europe what woman gives to man—the delirium of the secret of life. Greece took it in her great days; it came to her in the bitter but fertile embraces of Amazon, Centaur, and Titan. It looms in Æschylus, is conscious in Euripides, becomes white flame and cloud of myth in Plato. It is throned in Ephesus with the Virgin Goddess, rises from the sea with Aphrodite, and courses the hills with Dionysos.

Rome sickened and died, yearned for the baptism of blood in the Mithraic rite, found a sweeter and purer sacrifice upon the Cross. Christianity created the Middle Ages, the religion of Paul and the Thebaid, forgetful of the gracious rhythms of the life of the founder, remembering rather the mysterious expiatory anguish of his death as an Asiatic god, finding in the story of the Passion the per-

fect mythos of the desolate soul of man. More than any preceding religion or philosophy it divided soul and body like a sword, and from that very sundering there flashed the novel ecstasy craved by the tired and confounded world, in the flaming exultant sense of sin, in the bitter-sweet of renunciation, in the dream of bridal between the soul and her God. Heaven and Hell lie hard on Earth: the Four Last Things are imminent. The social order mirrors the dream-hierarchies, the circles and tiers of the spiritual Universe: Pope and Emperor stand over all with conflicting but mystical authority. Excommunications darken the day with their bat-wings. Justice is visible in combat and ordeal. The Jew is still the murderer of Christ, his guilt undulled by a thousand revenges. Slowly, slowly, the panic of the *Dies Irae* dies away, recurrent far into the dawn.

It is indeed like a dream, the history of Europe from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. There is a vision of close-pressed towns, girdled with walls and clasped with gates, their buildings rising everywhere in points of piercing sweetness and anguish, a thicket of spears and rose-bearing thorns, where civic life beats feverishly round the centres of Cathedral, University, Court and Belfry, nervous centres that are continually seized with convulsions of pleasure, cruelty, adoration, terror, rebellion. Existence is compact of the shifting insecurity, the incomprehensible transitions, the impossible, yet convincing metamorphoses, the unlawful logic of sleep and trance, and their moments of hallucinated waking. As in slumber, the experience of past days rises in unrecognisable forms. Virgil is an enchanter, Aristotle an Arabian magician, Alcibiades, in Villon's smiling ballade, is transmuted into

the beautiful woman Archipiada, the Mother of Christ is the Lady of the Moon, Aphrodite the dæmon of the Hollow Hill, while the Cathedral statues, with their quiet smile and their beautifully mannered and fluted raiment, are strangely reminiscent of Greek archaic or archaistic things. Over these children of swoon and fever the Cathedral rises on wings of illusion like a great mirage. The soul of man, spellbound as in nightmare, is torn in fatalistic contest between angels and devils in the carven judgments and moralities. Grotesques and obscœna mop and mow, absurd, vivid, irrelevant, among vines and roses, even as they undo some visionary tissue woven of mandragora. Human motives are fantastical—Vows of the Peacock, the Pheasant, the Heron. Among people habited like creatures from a symbolic Apocalypse, ladies horned like Astarte, cavaliers shod with twisting folly, extravagants like Louis d'Orleans clothed in pearled love-music, stir the frantic forms of flagellants, creep the hooded Jews and lepers to poison the well-water. The sculptured figures take the rigid attitudes of catalepsy, of an exquisite hysteria. Emotion reaches desperately into the phenomena of possession, in saint and in sorcerer. Death leads the *danse macabre* through it all, the Black Death whereof "la tierce partie du monde mourut." Inextricable confusions of race and place work out their frenzied sequels. France lies in the breast of Scotland; Normans and Germans fight and drowse in Sicily. There are Moors in Spain, Mongols in Russia; Huns and Turks fall in waves on christened lands. Frederic the Second is in Palermo, Louis the Fifth at Tunis, Edward Plantagenet at Nazareth. The pilgrims of the Earth are beating

the ways to Rome and Compostella: the princes of the world muster for the Crusades.

But through all this turmoil sounds the clear call of a divine sweetness, an angelical pity, as in the *Fioretti* of Saint Francis, or stories like that of the "Tombeur Nostre Dame." And the Spring goes smiling, as in *The Canterbury Tales*, or the French cantefables, or the Italian *novelle*. None can say the last word concerning the terror of the Middle Ages, none recapture the secret of its beauty. Its inhuman sensualities of pain and pleasure, so different from Renaissance excesses in the childish and unconscious quality that heightens their strangeness, are abundantly recorded. Yet the illuminations and the spires, the ivories, the carols, the saints, the murmur of heavenly singing, and the radiant volatility of later Gothic, all flame and flower, are also true expressions of its psychology; and it may be that the one range of phenomena is the condition by which the other exists. Perhaps it is an obscure necessity that the roots of the Tree of Life should be steeped in blood and filth before it blossom into the Rosa Mystica.

III

The supreme achievement, then, of the Middle Ages is the coil of miracle and myth, rapture and sense, which was its perplexed conception of Christianity. The mediæval Church could not, certainly, according to the indictment of its own Saints, separate the satyr from the angel, nor purge its priesthood of the craft, sensuality, cruelty, deceit, that cleave to traffickers in things occult, a folk distraught by ambiguous matters. The secret of corruption

lies in that archaic sweetly dreaming smile of the saints on Chartres and Rheims—the smile of the heresies that help to prepare the Renaissance. The waving and curving bodies of those queens and virgins smoothe the way for Leonardo's insinuating grace. The Church blindly martyred its virgin militant in Jeanne d'Arc, as well as hunted to death the gracious luckless children of the Pagan Frederic. The Popes made merry in Avignon while Italy was torn in pieces. But the beauty of religion is as inevitably dogged by the shadow of clericalism as love is by lust. If the impossible aspiration was often choked in its own ashes, if the ideal of asceticism drove the unfit to sensual sloth, if the flaming hour of the mystic was dearly bought with long days consumed by the cankerworm of the mediæval sin Accidia, still are there witnesses enough that the agitation and the rapture were actual. The flying buttress springs to aid the exultant leap of the spires and towers; the great rose-window is a wheel of jewels. The Benedictines are the tranquil servants of learning in their noble abbeys. Saint Francis is the perfect lover of the Christ. Catherine of Siena is fierce and tender, a candid prophet and patriot.

With this hybrid religion is involved politic, ethic, and æsthetic. Mediæval humanity makes its attempt at synthesis in the vision of the dual control of Europe by Emperor and Pope, a vision hopelessly obscured by the impossibility, natural to the time, of dividing temporal from spiritual claims. Meanwhile feudalism fits itself to the state of continual battle. The peasants, as the inventories tell us, are sometimes happy enough. Sometimes, devastated by the wars of the proud, they rise like the infuriated pathetic monster of Michelet's vision, and rage like chil-

dren or beasts, then are afraid, and fall still. But in the cities the crafts and guilds, sanest of mediæval expressions, force their power into communes. They find an ally in the King, or the Pope, and the might of the baron is crushed between.

The ethic of courage and courtesy is taught to noble youth through its development from page to squire and knight. Aspirations as well as failures must declare the intricate code of chivalry, and its beautiful doctrine of romantic love, reduced to dogma in the Courts of Toulouse and Narbonne, with their wilful charming verdicts, expressed in great words from Malory to Dante, provided with an anti-masque in the fabliaux, which with gross humour reveal the natural effort to maintain the equilibrium between soul and body.

Mediæval art is all of a piece with life: it is the unconscious vehicle of love, existing, not, in its first intention, for beauty's own sake, but as a great symbol, whose shapes, colours, numbers, odours, all sing together. The building is most eloquent of its yearning and its triumph —the churches, from the mounded and arcaded Romanesque, where strange beasts writhe in the foliated capitals or make their lairs on the windows, as at Worms, through the architecture of the Passion, the singing and volatile Gothic, all piercing points and praying spires, eager buttresses, windows of mystic trefoil, and tender chapels round the singing choirs, solemn trinities of portals, delicate clerestories and triforia, an architecture of thrust and counterthrust, tension and vibration, a spiritual fury and sweetness, a rapture of antinomies in itself. Think of Notre Dame and Saint Denis, Rheims and Amiens, Mont Saint-Michel, that sea-girt hill of holiness, Sens, Le Mans,

Troyes, Rouen Cathedral and Saint Maclou, the Sainte Chapelle, Troyes, Auxerre, and, most incommunicable in its silencing perfection, the king-cathedral of Chartres rising consummate over its plain. In Spain—Segovia, Salamanca, Burgos; in Germany—Strasbourg and Cologne; in England—Ely, Lincoln, Canterbury, Durham, Wells, sustain the inspiration, till at last the great overweening Gothic flames into death, passing in rose-colour like the autumn. As for secular architecture, the dead towns, Aigues, Mortes, Carcassonne, and Bruges, can still enchant the imagination; great cities, French, Italian Austrian, still keep poignant relics of the age of the great romances, and the fronts of guild-halls like those of Ypres, or Rouen, or the palazzo of Siena, could reproach an age that has driven the sense of beauty from its city life.

Tapestries in which devices of angels and orchards and fountains of youth are woven in tender flame of red and green and blue; carven stone, and ivories of virgins, angels and queens; missals like the *Très Riches Heures du Duc du Berry*; painting like that of the grave sweet Rhenish Masters, or the earnest Flemish Primitives, present a pageant of figures in unexpected angular attitudes, of which the shocks and surprises disengage an odd intensity of feeling, a kind of disquieting delight. In the monkish hostels on the great roads where jongleurs, kings, scholars, all manner of adventurous pilgrims meet, the making of the mediæval epic goes on. Literature yields the *Chansons de Geste*, the inexhaustible hybrid romance of Arthur and Tristram and the Grail, chronicles of naïf intensity, clotted with colours as violent as blood, as clear as flowers; and wrought verse-forms

—*rondeaux, ballades, virelais*, chiselled like rings and cups, yet ready for the bitter of Villon as well as for the sweet of Charles d'Orleans. Then it passes, with a sense of stirring birds, into the aubades of "il dolce stil nuovo" in Italy. The beauty of mediævalism has a peculiar quality of secret sweetness, the sweetness of the *clos*, the walled garden, the pleasaunce within the stronghold. It is akin to the prevailing notion of the mystical value of virginity, this sense of the extreme tenderness of lovely things inviolate as yet behind the bastions of haughty castles. The smiling angels and queens of Rheims and Strasbourg seem to know the archaic matters from which this sweetness is distilled: their sophisticate and precious selves are made from obscure stuff of elder night and immemorial myth. The heart's-blood colour of the windows of the Sainte Chapelle is the symbol of their gift.

For the fruits of the fierce or exquisite heart, the lives that ripen into legend, hang heavy in the Orchard of the Middle Ages—in the centuries that begin with Charlemagne, and know Godfrey of Boulogne, Jaufré Rudel, Pope Hildebrand, Gaston Phœbus Comte de Foix, Louis d'Orleans, the great Frederic and his beautiful sons, Du Guesclin, the Black Prince, Arnold of Brescia, Saint Bernard, Louis the Beloved, Richard the Lion, Alfonso of Castile, Raymond of Toulouse. As for the women, from the days of Theodora and Marozia, superb in Rome, they ferment and agitate, as lovers, sorcerers, saints, amazons, rulers. Eloïsa, who wrote of love more burningly than Sappho, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, with her roses, Francesca da Rimini, Blanche of Castile, Jeanne de Flandres, Philippa of Hainault, Eleonora of Aquitaine, Beatrice, Laura, Fiammetta—the Italian poets' three—and many

more, all fade before the impassioned Virgin of Domremy, beautiful as an army with banners, dreaming her half-heathen, half-Christian dream, inspired by tree-god, faery and saint, and gloriously attended by Saint Marguerite, Saint Catherine and Monseigneur Saint Michel.

But the son of Saint Louis is Philip the Fair. The spirit of the financier moves through the nations. Symbolism is burned alive with the Templars, and in later times, wonder and love and pity with the Maid of Orleans. The Popes are in Avignon. The Empire falls apart. Scholasticism grows weary to death. Saint Francis lies dead under two basilicas. Wyclifism, Lollardy, stir like cold winds through the Cathedral. Italy, never quite oblivious of her past, has caught an exciting contagion of Paganism from dying Constantinople, and France will find new life in Italy. The world stirs uneasily, awakes a moment, and—changes the dream.

(b) *The Change*

I

From about 1450 to 1550 some august motion renewed humanity. Man was born again, we say, to the consciousness of himself and his powers—realised that he was no mere fluttering thing between Hell and Heaven, but a lord of the tangible Universe. And a great body of literature tries to explain how this came to pass.

In great part inexplicable, in great part a piece of inevitable reaction, the Renaissance is yet no violent rupture of tradition, but the natural sequel of the Middle Ages, a beauty and passion succeeding to another kind of beauty

and passion, or rather subverting it, as one wave grows under another. The urgency of love still tortures life to new shapes and colours, compelling it to shed the old beauty like a husk, and travail towards the new. So the passionate asceticisms of mediævalism prepare new miracles of sumptuous efflorescence, as in the development of the orders of the orchid.

It is easy, like Michelet, to gather away from mediævalism the laic poesy, the romance of Aucassin, the singing of Provençal and Franciscan, the "climbing after knowledge infinite" of the great Hohenstaufen, the intellectual pride of Abelard, the love-Latin of Eloïsa, the dream of Joachim of Flora, to separate Roger Bacon and Rienzi and Arnold of Brescia, the Franciscan Revival and the Divine Comedy, Petrarch and Boccaccio, as not of their times, as forming an early Renaissance within the Middle Ages. But it is a poor kind of juggling to deprive a period of its fair strange things because the rest seem incoherent. These phenomena and people are intimately perplexed with the qualities of mediævalism, are indeed heightened in their values because of these. The Divine Comedy, and Joachim's vision of the angelic cupbearer, and the stigmata of Saint Francis, are mediæval, not of the Renaissance, in their concentrated passion, their union of the gracious with the grotesque, and their preoccupation with love rather than beauty, although, by strengthening, almost initiating, a peculiar tradition of audacity and delight, they make the Renaissance possible. The change is distinct enough. But the Middle Ages and the Renaissance interplay for long with dramatic and amazing consequences. Joan of Arc, that flower of mediævalism, is not burned till 1431, while Catherine of Siena, a thoroughly Renais-

sance woman in her intellectual passion and her love of beautiful youth, is born as early as 1347. *Amis and Amile* is a mediæval extravagance of Renaissance friendship. The *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas colours the web of literature till the times of the late Renaissance. Bayard, a protagonist of mediæval chivalry, does not die until 1524. Even the Emperor Charles V hopes to heal the feuds of Europe in a great crusade. Leonardo is deeply read in Albertus Magnus, and knows how the theologians consider Saint Anne. In full cinquecento, Michelangelo, Platonist and conqueror of matter, will defend the immortal youth of the Virgin with the scholastic subtlety of Duns Scotus. The composite architecture of the interplay, like that of Saint Etienne du Mont in Paris, or the Certosa of Pavia, or the façade of Orvieto, with its gaiety of arabesque and crowded Gothic intensity of movement, is at once fascinating and expressive.

II

The collapse of the distracted body politic of Europe also prepares for a new order of things. That mediæval dream of unity in a chaotic world, the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire, clasped in curious torsion through the darkling ages of overthrow the law of Rome and the love of Christ, then seethed away in the irreconcilable quarrel of the opposing arrogances of the Vicars Temporal and Spiritual. The two sanctions mutually destroyed each other in the fatal strife between Italy and Germany, wherein the subtle wrong of the spiritual power against the Imperial Defender transformed itself into the temporal right of defending the natural integrity of the

Peninsula. The personalities of the Empire that set its symbols on the Cathedral-palace of Aachen, figures such as brood, great paladins of vanished chivalry, round the tomb of Maximilian at Innsbruck, made their compacts, their invasions, their recoils, endured their alternations between the parts of redeemer and tyrant, for a vain end. Vainly had Otto the Third, lovely, illusioned, half-Greek, half-Saxon Emperor of dreams, cried his indignant heart over the Rome for which he had spent his treasure, his soul, his people: vainly had Henry the Fourth endured the anguish of Canossa: vainly had Frederic of Hohenstaufen wrestled to the death with the Papacy. The Empire ended with his tragic race. And it was inevitable. The fall of Constantinople ruined the conscience of the Western World, and shattered the conception of a United Europe; though the notion of the Holy Roman Empire in dying spored away in fatal fertilisation, and survived as a name of power for the adventuring Maximilian, and the vexed ambition of Charles the Fifth and his successors.

But the Pope was confounded by the ally he had hurled against the Emperor, and the Papacy became derisive as the toy of that Charles of Anjou who murdered the romantic Conradin. So there is great schism, and exile in Avignon, and a sense of the failure of authority. The nations are hardly aware that the king and the fisc are to succeed the king and the noble. While the quest and the hope are new, the excitement of change radiates through the sense of intellectual liberty.

Not without reason. The City profits by the long quarrel in which its masters are involved, and the dim suffering mass of mediæval days becomes a people, half-

conscious indeed, mobile and unruly, but insisting on a part in the drama. Italy first realises the change. The forts of the barons are beaten down: they must come within the towns. Tyrants are suffered, but by the favour of the people, and limits are set, even if the lord be Girolamo Riario in a townlet like Forli. The crowd may do wisely and unwisely; but a town may no longer be wiped out like Liège by its own hallowed suzerain. It *demands*, sometimes only *panem et circenses*, sometimes much more insubstantial, much more glorious things.

For there are no more sacred tyrants of the feudal kind. The despot now wins his tyranny by individual force or wisdom. He is a master of war, like the first great Sforza, of wisdom, like the first great Medici. He must interact with the Commune, and his Castello be a palace, fair without for his people's eyes, as fair within for his own.

III

In the weakening of the spiritual despotism, again, the scholar, the poet, the dreamer, finds his own. The tradition of intellectual daring and startling duality of temper was ardent enough through the Middle Ages. But this leapt into a great and joyous flame through the discovery of two antiquities, and more especially of the antiquity of Greece. The spectacle of that past made the world over again. And it is not amazing that Europe recovered with an unspeakable joy the vision of a nation so superbly conscious of the soul and the state as matters to be moulded as perfectly as drama and ode, so easily able by serene contemplation to subdue even the primi-

tive and obscure things of humanity to rhythm and pattern triumphal and assured.

The Hellenic remembrance, though strangely overlaid, had not been entirely lost. Aristotle had been a divinity coming through the Arabs. But the mediæval mind naturally kept the Roman memory better. It had Virgil as a saint, Boëthius, fragments of Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Cicero, Horace. The Clerici Vagantes sang their Latin songs of mirth and mockery. But the Renaissance brought Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Sappho, Simonides, the real Aristotle, Plato, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch, Pindar, Demosthenes. It renewed the conception of Roman law. It offered fragments of the sculptured Hellenic revelation of the beauty of the human body in itself, and so most profoundly altered the scale of mediæval values.

The classical revival comes slowly. Virgil does indeed lead the mediæval soul to the light of day. Boccaccio and Petrarch seek for manuscripts, and imperfect copies of manuscripts, with an almost tragic pathos, enduring with infinite patience the disgusting and brutal habits of a teacher whose only merit is a smattering of barbarised Greek. Brunetto Latini is one of the first to quicken with the real Renaissance passion for things antique in life and literature. Then Niccolò Pisano catches from sarcophagi the language of ancient drapery and attitude. The collectors write with avidity of cameos and medals. And the Turks break open Constantinople like a box of spices, of which the odours escape throughout Europe. But the duality of the rediscovery is maintained. Florence dreams its prototype Athens; Rome, inexorably Roman, dreams ancient Rome, though heavy with the spoils of Greece.

The New Learning came simply and superbly to the

fifteenth century people. They took it indeed as *litterae humaniores*, the lore that illuminated personality, and increased the richness of living. The joy in antique statuary was joy in a new incentive for original dreaming and devising. Architecture, painting, sculpture, verse, all remember Greece; but the inspiration has not yet petrified into canon and dogma. The Early Renaissance is the time of Botticelli's *Primavera*, of Signorelli's *School of Pan*, of Piero di Cosimo's *Procris*, of Agostino's basreliefs on Rimini temple, of Donatello's revel of delighted Pan-children at Padua. The themes are Pagan; but the troubled beauty of the work is new.

The gods return, but from exile, Venus from the Venusberg, Apollo from Picardy. The fragment of Hellenic antiquity set by the Calvary earth in the Pisan Campo Santo symbolises much. Mona Lisa is disquieting just because she has lived through both the Pagan and the Christian dream. Leonardo, the supreme Renaissance personality, understands that there is no possible return to Olympus, so he mingles the secret mediæval tradition with the new knowledge and understanding. The Renaissance sits in the lap of mediævalism like his Virgin in that of Saint Anne; and their mysterious smiling is akin.

IV

But the temper of man is changed nevertheless. The core of Mediævalism is the dream of love and its opposites; the core of the Renaissance is the dream of beauty and its antitypes. To the one, beauty is a divine accident befalling those in love with Love itself: to the other, love is the Platonic shadow of the exultation cast by

Photo by Anderson

FLORA

From Botticelli's "Spring"

(Florence)

Beauty, the great First Cause of spiritual joy. Mediævalism is often cruel and ugly; the Renaissance is often ugly and cruel: but the most splendid things in the history of humanity seem to flower from dim drift of earthly matter, as mystical love from physical urgencies, philosophy from superstition, the gods themselves sometimes from unimaginable abortions of animal terror and desire.

So many causes work together for a great psychological renewal, creating an immoderate power of pleasure and incomparable energies. The men of the Renaissance discovered the adventure of mundane life. The gods are in us and of us, said they: we are gods, let us conquer the Universe. All creation was in travail—but triumphant travail. They lived ten lives in one.

V

The sovran exemplars of the Early Renaissance are Italian. It was an affair of the Latin races—little more, in fact, at first, than the renewal of Italy. France was finally the great destroyer of the mediævalism she herself most perfectly fulfilled; but Italy began the New Age. She had hardly been mediæval at all—only fallen on sleep awhile, inherently Pagan, Latin in her heart, half-baptized under the spell of a religion subdued to her own nature. So the Greek wine was more eagerly seized to her banquet. The richness of her mingled races made her ready for fruitage; and she did not, like other lands, much fear the Church, of which she had the ironic comprehension of intimacy. She considered it as an earthly indulgent power, conniving cheerfully at any intellectual revel not inherently absurd, or discourteous, or actively

antagonistic to itself. The Italian inclination was to be, not heretical, like the earnest Northern races, but sceptical, and sufficiently aware of the dualism of the human mind to yield the Church her tribute.

And she was the more valuable a vehicle for the Renaissance spirit in that she was not yet a nation. Her rival, keenly individual cities caught up the themes of art and learning in ravishing divisions till the harmony was completed. Italy was ready—was indeed the only fit communicant. Then all her invasions and pangs served to shake her sweet and fatal pollen over Europe. She, the Siren who sang so many Emperors to their destruction, the bridal bed and grave of many nations, doubly sacred with Pagan and Christian adoration, prevailed in her anguish, passively enduring her violation, while her soul sat with her morbid lovely smile, her dream apart, her Greek, Roman, Lombard dream, and wove a subtle craft of deadly delicious revenges.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Coronation of Charlemagne in Rome	800
Death of Otto III	1002
The Emperor Henry does Penance to Pope Gregory VII at Canossa	1077
The First Crusade ends at Jerusalem	1099
Life of Peter Abelard	1079-1142
Death of Arnold of Brescia	1155
Return of Richard Cœur-de-Lion from Palestine	1192
Career of the Emperor Frederic II	1194-1250
Life of Roger Bacon	1214-1292
Life of Thomas Aquinas	1227-1274
Order of Saint Francis of Assisi founded	1209
Chartres Cathedral completed	1240
Death of Saint Louis	1270

The Mediæval Dream

	A.D.
Life of Dante	1265-1321
Popes at Avignon	1309-1377
Death of Joan of Arc	1431
Imitation of Christ composed	*c.* 1441

CHAPTER II

Social and Political Conditions

I

The Italy of the Renaissance became an astounding phenomenon to the rest of Europe—so diverse in her political state, so corrupt, it seemed, in social matters. Not that the land was really more given up to the Seven Deadly Sins than other nations; the startling beauty of Italian art and life merely threw their postures into stronger relief, while her imaginative curiosities, her researches in the art of living, complicated the violation of Christian morality with a sumptuous Paganism which had not yet shed its purple on the excesses of her sister-countries. Besides, her political conditions created a number of singularly conspicuous sinners in the despots, whose Cæsarian madness of inquiring desire fascinated the minds of English dramatists and French invaders.

Diversity, that diversity extolled by Guicciardini against Machiavelli's bitter cry for unity, is the note of Renaissance Italy. France, England, Spain, slowly became nations during the decay of Feudalism. But the long strife between Emperor and Pope had created the Italian Cities, not Italy, cities still friendly or hostile towards the Pope and the Pope's friends, divided within themselves by factions prolonging the old hates of Guelph and Ghibelline.

The cities themselves were the impassioned flowers of different soils, different races; and so Italy blossomed into

the garden of arts, lives, philosophies, all excitingly unlike. Civic patriotism beat unreasoningly against the vaguer dream of national faith, although now and then some great voice called instantly for unity. But for those who value the history of a land according to the sum of its enrichment of the human experience the one is even more desirable than the other. Antique Greece and Renaissance Italy, both exultant and unquiet with that love of the City which can be concentrated, concrete, cruel and tender and possessive like the love of a woman, are of all nations most indestructibly alive in the temper of humanity; for the beauty dusted from the anthers of the great towns that grew from their varying ranges and plains was wafted through the territories of their invaders. It is less an inspiration to love a country, unless it be a little realm: it is impossible to love a loosely massed composite of an Empire, since the infinite passion of love takes pleasure in imprisoning itself in finite symbols. The only empires that have dominated the imagination were gripped together by the spell of a city like Babylon or Rome—a spell such as emanates from no new-modelled capital.

On the diverse races, the diverse towns of Italy, cohering faintly in the dim dream of Rome, Lombard, Frank, Greek, Norman folk were precipitated, to accentuate more intensely the natural differences of the geographically various peninsula. The Lombard power separated away from Rome the cities it subdued; the Eastern Empire did not interfere actively with such towns as remained its remembrancers. So the strength of the Burgs became eminent. In the struggle of Pope and Emperor such feudalism as could lay hold on the reluctant Latin race

was vanquished or altered, though the fatal division not only set city still more keenly against city, but brought within each a dualism that subdivided and subdivided again in fatal fertility. Through the fall of the Hohenstaufen and the thraldom of the Popes, the naturalised Ghibelline nobles without the towns freed their serfs, but in vain. The Guelfic Commune triumphant would not bear the girdle of feudal keeps in its *campagna*; it brought the great lords within its walls—only to feed yet more fierily the flame of its factions. The Podestà was created, a foreign judge chosen each year to arbitrate between burghers and nobles, and keep them in some harmony. But from the fierce glad turmoil of the frantic town emerged the Captain of the People, shepherd and leader of the victorious party, guarding its interests, and watching "our exiles," as the kindly chroniclers call the defeated. Meanwhile the various Councils representing the *popolo grasso* or the oligarchy persist obstinately; and in convulsion after convulsion widen to admit the *popolo minuto*, the democracy, in the noble and imperative form of the Arti—Parlamento, Gian Consiglio, Credenza, or privy council, Consiglio della Parte, Consiglio del Commune.

II

Renaissance Italy, however, was not an Italy of communes, but a land of despotisms and oligarchies, masquing often under the haughty name of Republics. The Captains of the People found their office an easy path to autocracy, like Machiavelli's Castruccio Castracane; and there were other ways to supreme power, for the Communes were too distracted to settle their own outside

troubles. These new despots raised up another race against themselves in the bought soldiers or condottieri, wherewith they stayed their power, considerately unarming their own dangerously warlike people. But the new lords, whether dynastic or military, had to be quick with the spirit of the time, and purchase the city's favour by acts of courage, craft, magnificence—*virtù*, in fact, the power of swift and splendid conduct. They had to be scholars, founding great libraries, poets, writing carnival songs for their folk, soldiers, armed by fierce intelligence and physical vigour against plunderers like themselves. Like the priest of Nemi, the Italian Renaissance prince held his authority till another more desperately valiant could snatch it from him. Now and then some ambitious overman cast a great plot, and dreamed of a kingdom of Italy —Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Lodovico Sforza, Cesare Borgia, and even the pusillanimous Leo X.

Frederic the Second was the prototype of the Italian Renaissance tyrant, loving letters, arts, wars, and fair persons with singular intensity. There were several variations. Ferrara and Urbino, for example, perfected a delicate, gorgeous Court life under the sway of dynastic despots. In other towns, like Rimini, the despot held his own partly by claims of descent, partly by favour of the people. Some tyrants began as vicars of the shadowy Emperor, like the Della Scala and the Visconti families. Some had first been Capitano or Podestà. More had been great condottieri, like the Sforza. These are the men that ride superbly to all Eternity, immortalised by Verrocchio, and Donatello, and the great Leonardo, incarnations of irresistible force, like Hawkwood, Piccinino, Carmagnuola, Gattamaleta, Colleone, Giovanni delle Bande Neri.

Some, again, were a Pope's mignons, like Girolamo Riario at Forli, Cesare Borgia in the Romagna, Pier Luigi Farnese and his sons at Parma. Others were nobly born citizens, more politic or more picturesquely violent than all the rest, who gradually rose into supremacy—like the Medici, the Baglioni, the Vitelli.

The cities that carried the great name of Republics were not democracies in our sense of the word; and the burghers were but a small body of the citizens. They were restless—more restless than the despotisms—consumed by the passion for experiment, like Genoa, too artificial in their ideals of development. Internal factions rent them, as in "fair soft Siena," yet red Siena, seething with its parties of angry patricians, oligarchs, rebel delegates, plebeians, till in the sixteenth century Pandolfo Petrucci crushed the city into uneasy slumber. Only Venice, lonely and sumptuous, throned by the Adriatic, seemed the dream-Republic, concealing her stricter bonds under her bridal robes.

Both despotisms and Republics would have autonomy at any price; but with the passion for independence dwelt, as always, the desire to rend it from others. So Pisa devoured Amalfi, and Genoa, Pisa; Venice would fain have had Genoa; while the land of Italy lay unheeded, ready for the invaders.

III

The Renaissance Spirit works both with the despots and against them, rejoicing equally in tyranny and tyrannicide, in the tradition of Cæsar and of Brutus. Memories of Imperial Rome made more endurable the blood-lust of the Visconti and the banquets of the Borgia: Periclean

Athens entered into the growth of Medicean Florence. But the antique histories also quickened the fair fierce dream of Freedom, that beautiful chimæra for ever preying on the heart of a humanity that carries slavery in the pulses of its blood. Machiavelli in the *Discorsi* is as interested in conspirators as in princes; and his heart hankers eternally after the great example of the Roman Republic, while chroniclers like Matarazzo are torn between their æsthetic pleasure in the beauty of the splendid beasts of prey, and sorrow for their ravages. The perverse and subtle Lorenzaccio, after the assassination of Alessandro de' Medici, Duke of Florence, writes an Apology irradiated by the figures of Greek and Roman avengers. Olgiati with his two friends slays the tyrant of Milan with classic orisons; and he endures his torture in the anæsthesia of Hellenic memories. The sculptors carve Davids and Judiths to delight the eyes of the people who lapse softly at times under the Medicean rule. These dominant notes persist. In many senses the Latin Renaissance is fulfilled only in the Revolution, with Robespierre and Saint-Just for the children of Brutus, and Napoleon for liberticide.

Again, the Hebraic element, which crosses and darkens the clear Pagan traditions, alters now and then the history of a town, as when Savonarola gives Florence a constitution, and drags the capricious bright woman-city into a momentary theocracy.

IV

Presently five great powers emerge in Italy—Milan, Florence, Naples, Venice, and the Papacy; but these are

all jealous for their so different selves, and therefore willing to greet any ally, however alien or dangerous. So that the conjunction of the five stars of Italy prepares her horoscope for the disaster of invasion.

Venice sits isolated splendidly, mistress of the Adriatic, an Empire-City, dim and strange with sea and sunset, red-rose and emerald her palaces, hushed with a dream of the East—so serenely and nobly ordered that the sudden pang wherewith she gives pause to a Doge like Foscari or a condottiere like Carmagnuola seems justified by her divine nature, cruel and secret in its unimaginable ways. So like the very mythos and symbol of a state does she seem, this miracle on the waters, with her broidered palaces frescoed with festival, her half-heathen sea-coloured temple, her cargoes of peacocks, apes, and ivory from Tyre and Sidon. Her populace is carefully tended; her guilds have their largess of delight, if not their portion of power; her dependencies are wisely governed: her young patricians are moulded to the uses of the state, and her Doge, the hierophant of her suave implacable power, has a sacerdotal prestige and a mystical marriage like some priest-king of ancient Asia. She remains stable, moored fast by her elaborate Grand Council, working secretly and mercilessly through the Council of Ten, attentively watched by great nobles, who are also merchants, the close oligarchy of the Golden Book, long time aloof from the intrigues of the mainland, holding her own by espionage and caress, content with her Empire of the Mediterranean. By turns she fights and temporises with the Turk, against whom indeed she wars for sixteen years, unholpen by the other states who drew her into the conflict: she defeats Genoa her rival; then,

when the newly explored Atlantic sucks away some of the great trade routes from her marvellous sea, she preys uneasily on the inland cities; and, isolated, suggests the conquest of Naples and Milan to the French, till her intent policies enrage the terrible Julius and her other enemies into the League of Cambrai, in which the Pope, France, Spain and the Emperor combine against her. The wars that follow cover the period of her gorgeous decline.

Milan, that city of imperial and romantic tradition, had become the rich centre of bountiful Lombardy. It had at last fallen to the Visconti, whose power, faintly authorised by the investiture of the Empire, was established with a *coup de main* of cold master-craft by Gian Galeazzo, a king among the blazoned Vipers of his race. Gian Maria, whose hounds were sated with human victims, died for his lust and cruelty: his brother, Filippo Maria, suspicious, lowering, terrified till death taught him courage, called in Francesco Sforza as his condottiere, gave him his daughter Bianca in marriage, and so, unwittingly, raised up a new dynasty in the idolised and magnificent person of that peasant-soldier's son. But the power was speedily diverted from the direct line of Francesco's grandsons by their warden and uncle, the famous Lodovico il Moro, whose uneasy suspicion of possible assailants, and consequent interest in distracting factors, were prime causes of the coming of the French who were afterwards to destroy him. His tyranny was brilliant; yet its magnificence, while it amused the Milanese folk, exhausted the treasury; and his popularity lay more with the artists and courtiers he nourished than with the citizens, perplexed by their ambiguous prince, who seemed

to meditate indifferently the politic murder of kinsfolk, and the beauty of a masque arranged by Leonardo. He welcomed, then deserted, the fatuous Charles VIII, was himself overthrown by Louis XII, hungry for the Dukedom he claimed through Valentina Visconti, his grandmother, returned to an impoverished city that, having tasted the bitterness of foreign military domination, received him gladly, only to be again checkmated by the French, and betrayed by his Swiss mercenaries, the flambeau of his ducal pride guttering out miserably at last in the dungeons of Loches. Milan, moulded by Roman, Lombard, Oriental, and even more unexpected traditions, with a dramatic history in both sacred and secular matters, was wrought by Lodovico into an unrivalled masterpiece of sophisticated luxury. He himself was a magnificent and merciful duke, though some hesitancy of the nerves, some dubiety of intention, often contradicted the audacity of his mind. The Duchy, tossed about between invaders was at last restored to Massimiliano Sforza, at least nominally, by Julius' request, only to become in the end an imperial appanage.

Florence lives in eternal flux, experimental like modern Paris, till the Medici betray her liberties by their unostentatious capture of the councils. Under the sympathetic control of Lorenzo she reaches a climax of intellectual and artistic development. Thereafter she too temporises with the French, falls into a theocracy with Savonarola, has her revulsions, confuses her civic soul with Palleschi, Piagnoni, Arrabbiati, Libertines, and many doctrinaires, endures the later and lesser breed of Medici and casts them out again, till the apostate Clement avenges himself

Footnote: See Study of Milan in "Leonardo the Florentine."

by setting the remnant of the army that sacked Rome upon his own city at bay, beautiful at last with the desperate certitude of a heroic dream. She dies betrayed within and without, is violated by the rabble of Lutherans and Spaniards, and the last bastard Medici possess her corpse. But of Florence more hereafter.

Naples, the soft gracious siren-city, born to be the odalisque of a despot, after tragic histories found herself in the fifteenth century peaceful under the scholarly and dignified Alfonso of Aragon, really but an adopted and then repudiated heir of Joanna II. His natural son, Ferrante, broke the strength of the feudalism that was here more firmly based than in any other realm of Italy, completing by perfidy the violences of the Barons' War. Both he and his son Alfonso were seriously disturbed by the Angevin claim to Naples, which was dynastically of some authority; and, when Charles VIII reached Naples, Alfonso took flight, abdicating in favour of his child Ferrantino, who acted with much grace through the drama and regained the town after the departure of the absurd conqueror. But after his death the contention for the kingdom of Naples was resumed, and Spain devoured it in the end.

Rome is distracted by the terrific anomalies born of the presence of a Pontiff who is at once the Vicar of Christ and a temporal prince, and of the destructive idiosyncrasies of the amazing personages who "enjoyed the Papacy," as Leo X put it, during the Renaissance Period. The Pope may, like Sixtus IV, be intent on carving Italy to please his young nephews, or, like Alexander VI, on treating with Louis XII for the exaltation of his son in the Romagna, or, like Julius, on creating the States of

the Church by force of arms, or, like Leo X, on playing doubly with Francis I and Charles V for the advantage of his house, or he may, like Clement VII, by selfish cowardice overwhelm the Sacred City with the horrors of the Sack: he is always a factor in the dismemberment of Italy. Even that helmeted pope of battles, Julius II, with his cry of driving out the "barbarians," dealt with them amiably enough when his real interest, that of aggrandising the Papal dominion, could be farthered thereby.

So it follows that of all the five—Milan, Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice—not one was guiltless of the coming of the destroyers. During the Italian contentions, modern war and modern diplomacy, with all their tortuous and expensive sequels, develop with the plots of France, Spain, Austria, England, and watching Venice. Mercenaries like the Swiss and the German landsknecht import a new ruthlessness and a systematic devastation to the peninsula, while great soldiers like the cautious Gonsalvo da Cordoba, the swiftmarching and surprising Gaston de Foiy throw their brains as well as their courage into battle.

V

It was the prompting of Lodovico Sforza that finally brought Charles VIII of France, ungainly, unromantic dreamer of romances, strange child of Louis XI, on his militant picnic of an Italian invasion. Il Moro suspected Piero de' Medici, suspected Naples, whose princess had wedded the nephew whom he had displaced. He needed the French to divert attention till his power had assumed the aspect of permanence: also, by becoming their ally,

he hoped to dissolve their persistent Orleans claim to his dominions. Pope Alexander VI, after some petulance, made peace with the newcomers for his own ends. Ferrara, though not devoted to its Milanese son-in-law, also desired them; and Savonarola's party in Florence longed for Charles, the purifier and deliverer, with a mystical if mistaken urgency. He came headlong, tumbling into victories and out of conquests, sorely perplexed at Milan and Pavia by discordant, insistent appeals to his heart, inadvertently causing the fall of the Medici, painfully torn between Florence and Pisa, satisfying neither, enduring the magnificent affront of Capponi, "If you blow your trumpets, we will ring our bells," passing peacefully to Rome, bearing off the precious Djem, brother of the anxious Sultan, making compact with the Borgias, completing the moral ruin of himself and his army in sorcerous Naples, turning north with a hostile league forming firmly behind him amongst the welcoming friends now sick of his armies—Venice, Milan, Rome, Spain, Maximilian—yet escaping from the dubious battle of Fornovo against great odds, returning lightheartedly, without gain to anyone, yet having, out of his tumultuous folly and Italy's household jealousies, created a ruinous foreign policy and precedent.

The French were at first not so alien nor so repulsive to Italy, amused by the fine fantastic tradition of the imperial saviour, Charlemagne, so that Michelet's emotional account of the relations between the two countries, and his wrath at the ineptitude of the French kings who wasted the Italian lovingkindness, are not altogether unjustifiable. Louis XII came with a grim hereditary hunger for the Dukedoms of Milan and Naples, and was for a

while a great power in Italy, till the greeds of Spain, Maximilian, and, of the Swiss entangled and exhausted his armies in endless wars, lightened chiefly by the brief bright career of Gaston de Foix, and the mediæval knight-errantry of Bayard. The volatile Francis the First took up the Italian wars only too lightly, and the dashing victory of Marignano struck the key for a campaign of fortune. Evil chance, for so the long drama between Francis and Charles V was fought out bitterly in Italy! Francis, that specious knight-errant, is never faithful to the land that lures him. At last there is the tragic treachery of the Constable of Bourbon and the overthrow of Francis at Pavia. . . . Then, traitor in captivity, a king unkingly, he sells Italian honour with his own for his liberation. But Italy made a subtle and dangerous return when, a smooth girl in gold brocade, following the white escort of the Host between balconies hung with the damask roses of Provence and the lilies of France, Catherine de' Medici rode through Lyons into the House of Valois.

The Empire, undone from its holy traditions, become a mere deadening kind of centralisation, casts its Spanish and Austrian chains over Italy; and Charles V, in whom so many racial elements are stultified, sits withered on his omnipotent throne like a parody of the Renaissance ideal of synthesis. So, while other lands and states consolidated, Italy dreamt on, dependent on her mercenaries, till she fell before a lower type. This refusal to become a nation till so late in the history of Europe has been urged against her in every note of reproof and deprecation; yet that refusal was to our eternal advantage. Through the chaos of the internecine wars of Renaissance Italy, the "scheme and equilibrium" of Western Europe

slowly declare themselves, say the historians, with cheerful conviction that the change is from evil to good. But are "scheme and equilibrium" values in themselves to any but formalists? The period of conflict is the age of painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, a scenic public life and a complicated personal existence unsurpassed in the history of the world. That little states are more favourable to the development of human charm and intelligence than great nations seems an obvious enough moral. France, as a congeries of little kingdoms, Spain when it was many Spains, were great and fruitful in the things that justify humanity. England as merely England, Scotland as Scotland, Ireland as Ireland, wrought out their several tempers in priceless individual forms of expression. "Scheme and equilibrium" have ended merely in a deadly uniformity that impoverishes the capacity of the human race and encloses in hidden places the undying art which expresses human difference. The Great War, the last opposition of Teuton and Latin, unlike all other wars, since chemistry and machinery made it more an illimitable massacre than a war, has left us exhausted and cynical, and as yet without vision, inclined to mock at national aspirations which must require at least a century or two to materialise. The League of Nations may be a fantasy of individual persons; a league of articulate nations might be desirable. One could always trust humanity to make certain that it would not be a league of nations conforming to one pattern. Ghastly, unspeakable as future conflict in Europe must be, the peoples have not settled their differences, and councils seem more futile than ever. It is possible that the spirit of democracy may protest: "Give the workers their birthright, and let them live ami-

cably, though diversely." Even then, one who is both democrat and historian stoically admits that perfect peace may have its losses. Human genius often finds its most astonishing expressions in an atmosphere of strife. However, the dangers of perfect peace are as yet exceedingly remote.

VI

Of all this political turmoil there is criticism enough, for the Italians of the Renaissance are self-conscious through and through. The Florentines especially write their cold clear histories of burning matters—Villani, Bruni, Nardi, Varchi, the icy Guicciardini.

But the greatest of the critics is Niccolò Machiavelli, with his "sad lucidity of soul," so much too cognisant of his own age and its perils that Europe drove him into ignominy with a shudder. He contemplated the conditions of his time; he diagnosed the malady; he ardently advocated a remedy: yet his real patriotism failed to move his fellows because of its too despairing acceptance of things as they were. Besides, he made the eternal mistake of the theorist in imagining that formulæ fit for the inorganic world, even when inductively obtained from past experience, can cover the vital mystery of the follies, failures, recoveries, surprises, and triumphs of humanity. Out of place, out of favour, with the marks of the rack on his body, he dedicated his manual of princecraft to the degenerate namesake of the great Medicean Lorenzo, desperately hoping that this dukelet might dare what greater conquerors had failed to accomplish—the unity of Italy. Yet it is doubtful if the Duke of Urbino ever

glanced at this strange dispassionate book, crystallised out of a slow agony of passion.

Through *The Prince* dwells, like a deep mournful chord, the idea of the impossible beauty of a Republic. It is the desirable state; but, humanity being naturally perverse and disorderly, the times so distract and lawless, despotism is the one alternative to anarchy, and the perfect Prince the one saviour of Italy, a land to be redeemed only by inflexible will. With a calm tolerating recognition of the involutions of good and evil, Machiavelli examines the problem of how to become a prince, and how to bear oneself in a princely way. Beholding the conscienceless world of things as it is, he sees that the spoils are not to the spiritual victor. He is like an engrossed analyst separating the elements of political motive, a mathematician working out in cold algebra of diplomacy how to solve the equations of the desire of power and its beneficial fulfilment. Behind the dry sentences broods a dark pleasure in facing the truth and its consequences. Humanity is intimately known to him, the humanity of "the three scales of intelligence, one which understands by itself, a second which understands what is shown it by others, and a third which understands neither by itself nor in the showing of others." He knows the mortal inertia that in some states will passively maintain the accustomed ruler if he be no monster; can enunciate the bitter wisdom of the fact that "the injury we do to a man should be of a sort to leave no fear of reprisals." The Prince may have public and private virtues; but, since human nature is not quite governable, he had better give way, if he must give way, only to vices that do not affect his strength as a ruler. It is more necessary to be feared than loved; but

the Prince must be both lion and fox, and should seem, at least, to be merciful, faithful, humane, and religious.

The most characteristic passages, of course, occur in his contemplations of shining examples. The exposure of the follies of the occupation of Louis XII, who destroyed the weaker states he should have fortified and attached to himself, strengthened the strong in his friendliness for Pope Alexander, introduced a powerful rival in Spain, did not reside in his new dominions, made no colonies, and robbed the Venetians, is complete and contemptuous. But he has a scientific rapture over perfect examples in describing how Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia became Princes "by merit and good fortune." Cesare failed in his career of conquest, he holds, "through the extraordinary and extreme malignity of fortune." He displays Pope Alexander's diplomacy, craftily moving in the Romagna, restrained by doubts of the fidelity of his forces and the caprices of the French; then meditates admiringly Cesare's great master-stroke at Sinigaglia, where, under pretext of conference, he slew all the dangerous condottiere lords who had conspired against him; then considers the subtle wisdom of his dealings in Romagna, where he made the unfortunate Ramiro d'Orco an instrument and a sacrifice for the "pacification" of the region. Every contingency was foreseen, except that he himself should be ill at his father's death. Shaken by nearly mortal malady, he presently committed the supreme mistake of permitting the Della Rovere election to the Papacy, for "he deceives himself who believes that, with the great, recent benefits cause old wrongs to be forgotten." But for this mishap Cesare might have unified Italy; and

events would have compelled him to erect the states of the Church into a temporal kingdom—a most desirable consummation for Machiavelli.

In the *Discourses on Livy* and the *Art of War* he works out the same cold analyses, with the same candid delight in stating clearly the dreadful alternatives of practical politics. It was he who recognised in the mercenary armies the bane of Italy, proving beyond argument that, whether successful or defeated, they were equally dangerous, and urging the necessity of an armed militia. It was he who indicted the Papacy as the selfish destroyer of Italian honour and liberty. It was he who anticipated the Nietzschean indictment of the "slave morality" of Christianity by his cold criticism of that religion as destructive of the courageous virtues that build a strong state, because of its intense approval of passive endurance and long-suffering in the hope of heaven. And no lyric cry to Freedom can be more sincere than the secret exultation of the reference to Republics in this manual for tyrants. "In Republics there is a stronger vitality, a fiercer hatred, a keener thirst for revenge. The memory of their former freedom will not let them rest." And again, "For in truth there is no sure way of holding other than by destroying, and whoever becomes master of a City accustomed to live in freedom and does not destroy it may reckon on being destroyed by it."

His reward was that of a sinister and strange renown, and the hatred of Catholic and Protestant, the one detesting the apostle of tolerance, the foe of the Holy See, the other seeing in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew a bleeding fruit of his very teaching. But Elizabeth, and

William the Silent, and Henry of Navarre, no less than Catherine de' Medici, were "Machiavellian" enough in their policies; and the despot with a dream of consolidation has always been intimate with his book, to the days of Napoleon. The divorce between the ethics of the state and codes of individual morality has never ceased to exist, though now, not less than in the days of the Florentine secretary, is it still considered more than tactless to explain that no nominally Christian state conducts its business with regard to the beautiful anarchism of the gospels. Machiavelli recognised the fact candidly, and drew some deductions, without shock, shiver, or snuffle. You cannot eat your cake and have it. You cannot secure conquest and power with the conscience of a saint or even of a very honourable man. What is right is rarely what is expedient. Machiavelli examines conduct by its results, not its essential qualities. His fault lay, not in stating frankly truths still insufferable to many; but in this—that, loving a noble ideal, he attempted to compromise with its enemies, and quieted his conscience by trying to prove that the second-best is as good as the best. But, behind the gins and stratagems of the despots he considers, arises his great design, a dim pattern of the fair wings of Italian unity.

Another kind of criticism, more restive, more convincing, comes from the artist who is also a thinker. The weary indifferentism of Leonardo, and the tremendous indictment of Michelangelo's figures upon the Medicean tombs, as well as the sombre protest of some of his sonnets, reveal how these great spirits considered the fate of Italy.

VII

This Italy, then, lovely and unquiet, seemed to Europe a Garden of Armida, in whose arms her conquerors dissolved. Michelet's picture of the rude masque of the astonished French soldiers representing the legend of the Borgia is sufficiently vivid. Doubtless there were sober citizens in Renaissance Italy; but it was more obviously peopled by fiery-natured despots, strange heretical scholars, daring artists, deliberate exquisite women, and beautiful wanton boys, all intent on exploring themselves and others to the last recesses of pleasure or pain, and living in decorated towns set like a stage for their bridal and mortal interaction. All authority had been shaken, all the bonds loosened, all the curiosities awakened. So much was new that everything might be known: so much felt, there seemed no limit to feeling. The social psychology of Renaissance Italy, like that of ancient Greece, can never be analysed, nor the mysterious relation of the efflorescence of genius to some fever of the spirit be understood, until historians can state the mere facts of the case in a scientific temper, neither gloating nor deploring.

The social conditions of Italy, as they seemed to the Elizabethan playmaker, and as they still affect the chronicler of to-day, are mainly equivalent to the state of things that centres in the personality of the despot. For, as the leader of armies, the creator of courts, the patron of scholars, the lord of artists, the shaper of towns, he does strike the master note of the cinquecento.

It is true that astounding passions convulse with fratricide even the House of Este, delicate and courtly in

Ferrara; that the Malatesta and the Sforza and the Baglione and the Borgia families did things we do not now openly name, although they exist. It is extremely difficult to compare a frank with an insincere age. It is undeniable that the Italian despots were often cruel and lustful, moved both by the madness of their uncurbed power and by the insecurity of their tenure. They were like heathen gods, and acted like them, mercilessly, swiftly, with strange interludes of sweetness, tenderness, grace. But they played their part superbly—were alive spiritually and intellectually; and, knowing that their people required of them magnificence as the price of its forbearance, they justified themselves by bringing some forms of splendid existence to perfection. One madman might feed his hounds with human flesh; another commit incest like a pagan divinity. Yet the novelist Bandello shows even the degraded Alessandro of Florence doing justice to the miller's girl; and Galeazzo Maria Visconti can write a wise and vivid remonstrance to Venice concerning its selfish policy. Lodovico il Moro, with all his serene libertinism, makes a Milan like a great picture, calls to his palace scholars, poets, artists, lovers, till his many-petalled court sheds fragrance and charm over the whole city. Lorenzo devises sweet songs and pageantry for Florence, creates a Platonic Academy, and makes the Garden of San Marco, stored with Hellenic fragments, a school for artists. Alfonso of Aragon, king of Sicily in his own right, lord of Naples partly by Giovanna's testament but more by power of the sword, crowds his court with humanists, and carries his Livy for a breviary book. More, the Venetians, wishing to propitiate him, send him an armbone of that Livy for a holy relic. Leo X fills the

Photo by Alinari

LODOVICO IL MORO AND BEATRICE D'ESTE

By Andrea Solari

(Certosa, Pavia)

Vatican halls with music. Sigismondo Malatesta, strangest of them all, makes songs for Isotta, to whom until death he is faithful "in his fashion"; and for him Alberti turns a Franciscan church into a humanist temple. Federigo da Feltre is a just ruler and a merciful condottiere, a scientist, theologian, Aristotelian, who composes a court like a symphony, and founds a great school of education.

They justified themselves, as any live aristocracy must, by flowering, since an order that cannot flower, seeding hopelessly into dull folly, is at an end. The people endured them, for they fed its eternal hunger for the spectacle of beauty, magnificence, for a heroic breed spending itself in love, conflict, and spiritual liberty. The despots gave the bread of life, even if it was leavened with blood; so that the *popolo minore* was nearer to them than to the aloof feudal princes of former times or to such trivial and vanishing representatives as exist to-day. The beauty and brutality of ultimate things were manifest in these overlords, making them dear if intolerable. They were superb gladiators in the arena of life, where their folk might sometimes decide the final thrust. A Renaissance Prince was a banner for the imagination, in his charm, passion, and audacity, going burningly about the world which caught fire from him. The strange heads stamped on the medals of Pisanello or Pasolini, brooding and sullen in their pride, wreathed with unsatisfied desire, are moulded of fatality and power; but the mouth is of torment.

The family history of the Baglioni is eloquent of what Perugia, and the peasantry round it, endured in them. Unrestrained as tigers, as lithe and as gorgeous, these princelings stormed and slew in the hill-town where

Perugino imagined the smiling, infinitely tender Madonnas, and the young Raphael learned by heart their delicate insolence for the figures of his frescoes. Matarazzo is deeply moved when he speaks of them—the wise Guido, the High and Mighty Astorre, all golden and chivalrous, Semonetto, at eighteen years a cruel and lovely Achilles, the puissant Giovan Paolo, the centaur-like Gismondo, the slim Protonotary Gentile, the bitter Carlo, and Grifonetto, for beauty a second Ganymede, who was with his wife "like angels in Paradise," but who, poisoned in heart by Carlo and others, resolved to slaughter all his kinsfolk, at a time when the dazzling nuptials of Astorre might indeed have provoked the wrath of the gods. "For that which was to happen must needs come to pass." The chronicler describes, with the pity of a Chorus, *el gran tradimento*, the tragic slaying of desperate unarmed men, the great stateliness of Astorre and Semonetto dead, the escape of Giovan Paolo, the somnambulistic condition of Grifonetto when his "sweet mother" Atalanta cursed him, and would not see his face, the dreadful dramatic meeting of Giovan Paolo and the traitor, his wounding, and the coming of his mother. "Thereupon the noble youth stretched out his right hand to her that was herself so young, and clasped his mother's white hand in his. Then at once the soul left that beautiful body and departed, comforted with the very great blessing of his mother in requital for those former curses." And the church was washed with wine. And the city went on suffering strange oppressions; yet was "had in honour" because of the pomp these fierce princes maintained.

And was right in a way. For the despots were of the people. The triumph of the individual is the joy of the

Renaissance. Beauty, genius, courage, craft, some exquisite, or dissolvent, or quelling personal value might make you a despot, or a lord of despots. Certainty of heirship, imperious right of birth had vanished. It was the age of love-children; Leonardo, Alberti, the Malatesti, the Estensi declared in diverse ways the unsanctified unfettered passion of their birth; and the lowly sat in the seats of the mighty. Worth was the bond of friendship. Ficino and Poliziano are really beloved of Lorenzo. Alberti, Raphael, and Leonardo are received as great lords. The Pope is ready to go to war for Michelangelo. When Poggio writes *On Nobility*, he agrees with Niccoli and Lorenzo that this nobility rests upon the power and charm of personality.

VIII

So was developed an art of life, built round with scenic architecture of cathedrals and palaces, set harmoniously, woven of action, love, diplomacy, music, madrigals, pictures, gems, lovely brocaded persons, Latin orations. This artistic product lay frankly open, more or less, to the public eye. The castle became a palace, the garden enclosed, a loggia, the college an academy, the guild-house a thing of beauty.

The educated classes moved into one, now that nobles and burghers were pent together within the walls. The arts and crafts kept their dignified ways through all the din of battle and the sack of cities, enriching the world with workmanship both superb and sincere, for it was constantly required of them, and, whether in war or peace, their doings lay in a great sunlight of approval. The still

poorer sort endured, suffered, were ravaged by famine, sack, and pestilence; yet were succoured by many guilds and brotherhoods with sacrificial tenderness; yet found life sweet in the sun, had much laughter and horseplay and festival, and were leavened by romantic hopes now long ravished from them. It is to be repeated that in that age of *virtù*, courage might make a peasant's son a condottiere and a duke; a liveliness at his letters, a scholar for whose presence cities wrangled; a sense of rare colours and lovely shapes, an artist for whom princes disputed. At the worst, they had their pleasure in the spectacle, their joy in the drama of existence so ignored by the modern reformer, who thinks man can live by brown bread and eugenics alone, and cannot understand why the stair of a slum courtyard may sometimes lead more directly to the palace of rapture than the porch of a garden city. Besides, every child born into a city of Renaissance Italy entered into a heritage of visible beauty, which quickened the pulses day by day, a life of processions and festivals in public squares made marvellous by the greatest genius the place could buy, for it was not yet an era when the people could be put off with trash. They moved freely in the august presence of great art, for bad art had not yet been invented.

IX

The sinister note is the growing worship of wealth and its illimitable powers. To raise the incomparable domes, Indulgences will bring money and enrage Luthers. To build the great palaces, to hire the troops, to reward the artists, maintain the scholars and poets, send the em-

bassies, buy the Papacy, money must come. So the financier rises into fatal honour, and the moneylender also becomes a prince. Charles V is Emperor through such auxiliaries; and the Spanish thirst for gold ruins the newly discovered world. Germany sees itself sold; and realises that monasteries may be a richer prey than the Jews.

At first the darker import of the financier is not apparent. He takes on the flush of his time, and easily assumes the habits of a great lord; but as the excitement of the period fades, his evil shows cold and hard. Money is adored for itself, and the great middle class slowly and massively builds those ramparts of mean and narrow comfort, and base security, which have for centuries repulsed the attacks of the impassioned and the pure in heart.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Gian Galeazzo Visconti created Duke of Milan	1395
Naples falls to Aragon	1435
Fall of Constantinople	1453
Alfonso the Magnanimous, Lord of Naples, dies	1458
Francesco Sforza dies	1466
Reign of Lionello d'Este	1407-1450
Death of Sigismondo Malatesta	1467
Assassination of Galeazzo Maria Sforza	1476
Death of Lorenzo de' Medici	1492
Fall of Granada	1492
Invasion of Charles VIII	1494
Battle of Fornovo	1495
Cesare Borgia attacks the Romagna	1499
Fall of Lodovico Sforza	1500
El gran tradimento of the Baglioni	1500
Cesare Borgia destroys his Condottieri at Sinigaglia	1502
League of Cambrai	1508

	A.D.
Niccolò Machiavelli	1469-1527
Battle of Ravenna	1512
Death of Pope Julius	1513
Battle of Novara	1513
Battle of Marignano	1515
Charles V Emperor	1519

CHAPTER III

Intellectual Contrasts and Reconciliations

I

The antitheses of intellectual and spiritual attitudes which astound the adventurer in Renaissance history were indeed sufficiently preluded during the Middle Ages. The persistent Asiatic undertow continually dragged the barques of the faithful to the shores of the sweet Pagan lands of Phæacia. From Spain and Sicily wandered the legends of Moorish pavilions of pleasure, intricate and impearled: the great marts of Bruges and Venice exhaled the luxury of the East, till it was borne like new Magian offerings into the very Nativity and Paradise pictures in their churches: even the scholars of Cluny had their silks and ivories and painted things, mutely communicating the insidious heresies of the senses. The Crusaders went and came, weary with ironical surprises; and the Templars, smitten with blasphemy in the very Holy Places, made themselves as gods, and worshipped in alien symbols. Arab and Jew infected even impassioned Christians with curiosity concerning Avicenna, Averrhoës, and Aristotle. All this Orientalism of temper pulses strongly into the Renaissance, especially through half-Asiatic Venice, its gracious languor altering the chemistry of the soul of Europe, and commingling the revival of the Greek spirit with a more dissolvent reverie. So that the ideal of antiquity is still confused, a god of Asia and Greece,

Dionysos, not Apollo, a reconciler of East and West, of ecstasy and reason.

The real note of the Renaissance is not its violence of contraries, but its conscious yearning after the reconciliation of contraries, some synthesis to bring into harmony all the gods, all the desires, all the curiosities. The smouldering incense-like heresies of the Middle Ages had already perfumed the altar for the God in whose burning ecstasy all things were to be unified. Against the mystical saints the dogmatic saints found it hard to keep doctrine untainted; and round the Alexandrian sweetness of the Fourth Gospel many visionary souls had hovered like violet moths. In 1134 the idea of the Immaculate Conception became part of orthodox belief, deepening the sense of intimacy between human and divine, striking its strange aurora of Paganism through the faith. Then there were the lovers of the Holy Ghost—the Albigenses, expiating their Saracen heresies concerning body and soul under fire and sword, and the Brethren of the Free Spirit, burned desperately at Cologne. The Fratres Textores, muttering lullabies of God over their looms, Robert d'Arbrissel trying to strike a tender unison of sex in the honour of God by founding the Order of Fontevrault; the Fratricelli of Italy, the Quietist Dominicans of Strasbourg, mystics like Eckhart and Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroeck, are all variations on the theme, *Deus est omnia.*

Amaury of Chartres had prophesied three ages of history; but it was Joachim of Flora whose vision had aroused some passionate expectation of a miraculous conclusion to a trilogy of divine evolution. He had met in the garden the Angel with the burning cup. "The kingdom of God is past, the kingdom of the Son is passing, the

kingdom of the Holy Ghost is to come," said he, and embroidered the theme with beautiful exciting images. The Holy Ghost who could reconcile East and West, human and divine, under whose power the visionary would live in the inexhaustible ecstasy of love, was to brood over the kindling world. But Saint Francis, praising God through the fortressed cities and the austerely sweet springfields of Umbria, kindling the rapture of the Pantheist in the censer of the Canticle to the Sun, with his childlike equalities, his kind order of Tertiaries for those wistful souls torn between Earth and Heaven, was a better reconciler yet. So was Jacopone da Todi, loving Love for its own sake, neither because of wings in Heaven, nor pangs in Hell, singing *laudes* in the vulgar tongue out of his Papal prison-pit. Among the intellectual heretics, Abelard, striving towards the marriage of the intellect and the imagination, founding the monastery of the Paraclete, acclaiming the Redemption as a pure act of love, singer, Grecian, Hebraist, dialectician, suave and ironic like Renan, till he was denatured and embittered: Guido Cavalcanti, dreaming in Florence streets, "seeking reasons to prove there is no God": Boccaccio, with his Pagan gaiety and moments of terrified superstition: Petrarch, starving for Greek, yet calling for divine aid:—these, though mediæval in their fibre, are among the real precursors of Renaissance intellectual contrast. Frederic the Second, again, is almost pure Renaissance. This strange being, who loved Asiatic, Arabic, Grecian, and Northern elements, who issued gold coins of antique beauty, who essayed curious reconciliations of Averrhoëism and Kabbalism, who drew to himself the sinister renown of the authorship of the mystic *De Tribus Impostoribus*, yet

crowned his sombre and splendid head at the Holy Sepulchre, who kept a clear detached mind amid a fierce mysticism of the senses, whose insatiable curiosity Michael Scot and many another laboured to appease, yet who was ready at times to persecute other heretics when it suited him, was "modern" to the last degree in his Sicilian court.

Above all, Dante, with his arrogant assumption of the supremacy of his own ethic, his praise of adolescence in the *Convito,* his exultation in the defiance of the proud and the heretical in their circles of torment, as well as in the unimaginable God who exiles them there, walked among the gods in his mediæval robes from the morning till the close of the Renaissance day. "Thou art more worthy than the Crucified," said the Renaissance scholar at Ravenna, taking the tall candles from the High Altar to set them by the tomb of Dante. For the poet whose supreme work was an imaginative synthesis of the learning and the passion of the Middle Ages shared with recovered Greeks and Romans the idolatry of Renaissance Italy. Petrarch and Boccaccio had transmitted the cult of his tender and angry Song, with all its startling images, its strophes of impassioned music built up from the familiar sirventese. His spiritual pride was of the Renaissance kind; he also loved the beautiful shapes and sweet voices of antiquity; like Renaissance philosophers he exalted an intellectual love that rose superbly from mortal coils to an angelic rapture, for the chivalric love of Dante, mediæval in its wasting passion, nevertheless sought the same goal as the Love that came grave and fair from the Platonic dialogues to be garlanded and disguised by the roses of Bembo's apotheosis. Therefore

Michelangelo brooded over the Commedia, and made his great lost drawings for it, and in the cold twilight of his age called for Dante's aid when he painted his terrible "Last Judgment" for the Farnese Pope and his trivial cardinals. Therefore Leonardo, creating his mysterious Anna, was aware, among much else, that so the mother smiled at her daughter in the core of the Mystic Rose. Therefore Botticelli in soft silverpoint transferred those great rhythms to his own wavering and delicate patterns of winged gryphons and burning wheels, of figures wafted through flowery or flame-prickt spheres. Landino lectured on the poet in the Duomo, and Lorenzo the ironical had shame because he could not recover his dust. In luxurious Milan the Dante Reader intoned the welling terza rima to the Duchess at the sunset-hour. In Verona and in Mantua the name of Dante went sweetly consonant with the name of Virgil. In Rimini was he remembered; and by her mournful shore Ravenna among her pines kept his tomb as jealously as the blue fires of her Byzantine mosaics.

II

The difference between the Renaissance and the mediæval conflict is that, partly because of its long preparation, partly because of historical, geographical, scientific discovery, partly because of the overthrow of authority, the human soul becomes *conscious* of itself and its antinomies, while the human body asserts itself as an equal, no longer an excommunicated thing, merely endured when not proscribed. The soul, realising that it was conscious before, in Athens, in Rome, and even in Jerusalem, becomes

conscious again; and, realising also that the body once before, in Athens, in Rome, though not in Jerusalem, seemed one with itself in beauty, invites it to declare that lost wisdom. Consciousness is a rapture. The two, exasperated by the long division, meet and kiss. Good and evil unmask their kindred eyes. Reason and instinct communicate together. The strange Dove, symbol of life to many times and nations, hovers overhead, and the Kingdom of the Holy Ghost seems begun:

"Shake off your heavy trance
And leap into a dance
Such as no mortals use to tread,
Fit only for Apollo
To play to, for the moon to lead
And all the stars to follow."

The rage for synthesis rises into fever. All art is thrilled with exquisite ambiguities. Is it god or angel, is it virgin or boy, is it Eros or Saint Sebastian that is pierced with his own arrows? Is the forerunner Saint John or Dionysos? The monks are artists, the Grecians are saints; the condottieri are humanists; the intellectuals have their martyrs, idolators, confessors, lovers of reliquaries, adorers of the Holy Blood of learning; the emotionals have the diamond-like penetrations, the furies of curiosity, all the anomalies of "thinking hearts." That Italianate Elizabethan Ford is right in making his Giovanni reason out his strange love and agony like a hero of Shelley's. Chiefs sink in the people: the people rise into chiefs. Humanity wakes in the garden of knowledge, and runs to eat all the fruits. Forts and Gothic churches are deserted. The sun is above, and the women must even have sun-coloured

hair for the festival of life. Man, nor suppliant nor slave any more, is alone in the infinite with gods and devils of his own making.

> "Where we are is hell,
> And where hell is, there must we ever be,"

is now his cry when he knows irreparable defeat. Only he must keep enough mediævalism to give a faint savour of sin to his revels. The confusion of Christianity and Paganism wrought out more sophisticated modes of spiritual experiences. From the divorce of body and soul had been born the peculiarly Christian sense of sin, that notion of the mystically forbidden which no return to Hellenic ethic could ever efface. For there was a joy in that forbidden when He who forbade was a Prince and the Lover of the Soul, since thus from sin one repented in sharp ecstasies of shame, penance, pardon, reconciliation, all the tender masochisms of the Saint. So from mediæval raptures was retained the sense of emotional guilt, the half-ironical, half-perilous new conception of the forbidden—Renaissance, "Italianate," inviting to any adventure.

Half-ironical, stimulating rather than restraining arrogance! Upon this widening world, under the dissolving sky, of Columbus, Galileo, Copernicus, the spirit of man is drunken with pride. Knowing he has raised the heavens and sunk the hells, he drops the plummet of his power and finds life unfathomable.

III

With this realisation—or magnificent illusion, which is almost as potent—the Renaissance mortal creates a type,

l'uomo universale. It seems so agonising to forgo any opportunity of sensation—to be a captain without being a humanist, courtier, lover, poet; to be a sculptor without being engineer, architect, painter, goldsmith; to be a lover without exhausting every opposed mystery of the art and compelling all graces and philosophies to its service. So a kind of man arises, almost incredible in energy and versatility—not paralleled at all in our times, though the strange group of English Pre-Raphaelite people, especially Rossetti and Morris, approach its artistic catholicity more than others. But men like Leonardo, Michelangelo, Alberti, Pico della Mirandola, Lorenzo de' Medici, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Sidney, seem possible only in an age in which the things of the intellect are supremely esteemed, and personality is the greatest of the arts.

Leo Battista Alberti, for example, has a miraculous dexterity in physical exercises, especially archery and riding; he is a master of music and arms; he can paint, and write on architecture (he first of all conceiving it as great music), and compose Latin verse. When, at twenty-four, he breaks his health in his inordinate study of law, he turns with a sigh to repose in physics, mathematics, astronomy, and in building serenely arched temples such as that of Rimini. He is nevertheless a good comrade, and a man of most lovable temper, whose chief concern, after all, is the noble conduct of life. Landscape also he loves, and the conquest of difficult hills, so that few modes of vitality seem denied him.

Gaston de Foix in France, Sidney in England, the half-fabulous Admirable Crichton in Scotland, reveal how widespread was flung the net of this ideal. Renaissance men begin early, not prolonging childhood at the expense

of the passionate irrecoverable period of youth. Philibert de l'Orme rules a hundred workmen at fifteen; Gaston de Foix lies dead in his beauty at twenty, lord of five victories. Boys are prince cardinals at fourteen, ambassadors of real import at the same age.

IV

Of course, during this close-pressed period, life has an intense value; and so, as with all times and natures of extreme vitality, the conclusion of life becomes an intimate and imaginative obsession, since only cowardly and impoverished ages, dragging out a gross and colourless existence under a failing sun, refuse to consider the Triumph of Death, and deny the tribute of great verse and carved work and other beauty to the last and sovereign adventure. Simonetta dead is borne to her grave, garlanded and robed, in an open bier, that the people may see her haunting disquieting face, sovran with sleep, while the princes of the House of Medici walk among her hooded torch-bearers. And the sepulchral statuary of the Early Renaissance has not its like for divine pity, and nobility, and wistful concern for the so lovely dead. Beatrice d'Este in the Certosa at Pavia, Ilaria del Carotto at Lucca, Medea Colleone in Bergamo, Lorenzo Acciaioli in the Certosa of Florence, Guidarello Guidarelli, and Gaston de Foix at Ravenna—there are no more royal sleepers in marble than these early fallen.

Early fallen! The Renaissance is not tender in its temper; it has all the cruelty of things triumphal. But its adoration for youth aflower, and its sorrow for youth untimely destroyed, are piercingly sincere. For, when life is

so manifold and so intense, youth is its great moment, when body and soul make one sweet chime together, and the senses are as joyous as the spirit is untired. Michelangelo and Shakespeare are alike ardent enough when they cast their pride of art in the dust before the momentary perfection of a piece of perfect humanity—a beauty "whose action is no stronger than a flower." Narcissus, Hyacinthus, moved in brocaded cloaks, the gracious half-conscious pride of life just touching divinity; and the love of the gods seemed to linger about every child laid in his marble sarcophagus broidered with wreaths and torches, supported by not altogether Christian angels. The Renaissance people, of all Pagan festivals, keep spiritually the drowsy beautiful Anthesteria, narcotic with the dream-like resurrection of souls and flowers.

And with this tenderness for youth aflower, let it be remembered that the Renaissance, with all its animalism, agreed with the Middle Ages in setting a mystical value on chastity. It was an æsthetic rather than a Christian value, a Greek as well as a Christian value certainly—a kind of reverence for beauty inviolate and dedicated, like that of the severe Hippolytus. Artemis even as Aphrodite might be a fatal goddess, believed the sons of the Renaissance; but her silver crescents, her holy springs, and her pure fillets, had their artist's admiration. The young Cardinal of Portugal, dying virgin for all his beauty, Cecilia Gonzaga refusing worldly glory, seated by her unicorn under the young moon in her imperishable medal, scholars like Vittorino da Feltre so disciplined by the love of learning and an austere ideal that they disdained the relaxing comfort of earthly marriage, young Florentine idealists who died like the iris rather than obey the

psycho-analysts of their time, were all celebrated with sincere enthusiasm by a period that, ravishing all the roses, adored yet more the unravished asphodel.

V

The *uomo universale*, having learned all things, felt all things, desires his philosophic synthesis. He loves the Pagan gods, still better, the Platonic myths, nor would he crave a rarer epitaph than "His ghost be with the old philosophers!" Yet his curiosity prises now and then the magic locks of the Kabbala, while in his blood persists the incurable hunger for Catholic ritual. And why not, since Catholicism absorbed unto itself so much that is Pagan in the immemorial incense and symbolism and music, absorbed even the festivals of remoter antiquity, and baptized the very gods unto saints? The most frankly joyous Prelate wants in the end to lie where he can

"hear the blessed mutter of the Mass
And see God made and eaten all day long."

It all ends in what it is convenient to call a "paganism" of conduct. When Love is fervent it cannot say: "I approve this, hate that," nor separate the perverse or incomprehensible colours from the "flashing beauty of the beloved." These lovers of antiquity, desiring, though vainly desiring, to make themselves anew in its image, adopted with enthusiasm what their Christian codes called sinful, as well as what seemed innocent and inviolate. But there were differences. There was a Roman paganism of Rome, and a Hellenic paganism of Florence; and it is in some sense the cause of the failure of the

Renaissance that the Roman triumphed over the Greek spirit, as once before. Florence, all rose and lily, with her perfect aspirant Campanile for the calling heart, and her perfect Dome for the achieving intellect, with her clear, temperate, delicately outlined vision, her flowery singing days, her sense of rhythm and pattern in all her works, her note of reticence in passion, of irony in sweetness, volatile, but with the spirit of fragrance, capricious, but with the genius for weaving her caprices into a web of charm—Florence the mother, if the wayward mother, of all the greatest artistic genius of the Renaissance, went down because the senseless riot, the orgiastic excess, the luxurious, Cæsarian, unoriginal magnificence of Roman Rome, that jumble of haughty dwellings quarried out of monuments much haughtier, drew the Northern anger on itself, and basely hurled it on her—on her, not guiltless of folly, but nobly recovered for a desperate defence.

The famous legend of the Borgia family, however much or little be fable, presents an aspect of the Renaissance. In the Borgia rooms of the Vatican, painted all over by Pinturichio with rose and golden stories, lovely and innocent, with gilded bosses and blue of the cherubim, like the tales that engage a fanciful child to sleep, with Lucrezia pleading as Saint Catherine and Pope Alexander meekly kneeling, the Madonna and the saints on the walls, Isis and Osiris on the roof—in those rooms long sealed by the imprecation of Julius, the entirely Pagan revels of the *Banquet des Courtisanes* took place on All Saints' Eve. Pope Alexander, la bella Giulia, his idolised children, the Duke of Gandia, Cesare, and Lucrezia, a golden group satisfying every desire in the holy house of Christendom, the immoderate celebrants of their Lady of

Pain, have become the very myth of one side of the Renaissance. Yet Pope Alexander was a less intolerable pontiff than many. He paid the salaries of his servants, was good-humoured and not cruel, despite the legendary poisons shut in the black pearls. As for Cesare, he was Machiavelli's "superman" indeed—magnificent, perfectly unflinching, an admirable captain and a just lord during his occupation of the Romagna. A singular figure, *biondo et bello*, once "the most beautiful person of his century," humanist in his education, yet ready to slay his totem, the bull, in the public ring, secret immeasurably in his private life, dazzling with supreme pomp when he appears publicly, setting themes for poets in his camp leisure, or promising a codex to his military engineer Leonardo da Vinci, rolling a golden perfume ball between his hands as he meditates the tranquil and ruthless path to his end—a path strangely diverted to an obscure death on a battlefield in Navarre.

But Christianity awoke again and again in the passion of the Renaissance. It seemed as if once more it fought in strange interactions the Mithraic rite, reincarnate in the Bull of the Borgias. The Classical Revival was not altogether against it. In one way it quickened that ancient sense of the necessity of propitiation, of the adoration of the dying God, which brings, in the great Latin mystery of the Mass, the bread of angels even to the unbeliever: the need for ecstasy which drove the Greek to the Orphic rite and the Eleusinian mysteries did not depart from a humanity that had slept for centuries in the Garden of Gethsemane. In another, it made more apparent the Hellenic charm and grace in the Gospel story, all its idyllic elements of Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, its decora-

tive pattern, and grouping of tender figures. We find it in Gentile da Fabriano, Lippo Lippi, Filippino, Donatello, even in Raphael—the joyous tender Franciscan vision doubled with an æsthetic delight.

VI

So now and again there are passionate returns to the purification of faith. Fra Bernardino purges the fire from the terrible eyes of Siena with tears of repentance, and humbles her to walk awhile with pierced feet in the very ways of Christ. Suor Colomba, "delicately made and fair to see" in her hood of white cloth, lies in trances, fasts and prays in fierce Perugia; and the Baglioni, those cruel, handsome Græco-Roman creatures, come to talk to the pale strange saint. Even the Borgia Pope could weep and confess like a child. Indeed by fits and starts the Renaissance desired the sense of sin. That desire the Pauline and ascetic Christianity of Savonarola acutely satisfied. Extreme comes most kindly to extreme. Idolator and iconoclast understand each other best, since both confess the power of the idol. Therefore Pico della Mirandola and Botticelli and Michelangelo and even Lorenzo himself had their reverence for the monk who kept for them the bitter savour of the hour of penitence, when nothing else could slake the satiate soul.

Girolamo Savonarola represents a moment of arrest in the Renaissance drama, the resurgence of the mediæval conscience, the voice of terror and doom that cries through the sudden quietudes of exhaustion, when the eyes are sick with seeing, the ears with hearing, the senses with passion, the mind with understanding. No "re-

former" in the Lutheran sense, this Ferrarese monk was in the direct line of those Puritan and ascetic saints, like Bernard of Clairvaux, that have steadily maintained the iconoclastic wrath of the desert anchorites and the early Christian Fathers within the all-transmuting Church. Though he had fasts, trances, prayers, he was rather priest than saint, more of Paul than of Christ, dogmatic, narrow, sincere. Thoroughly shaped by the mediæval training of his Dominican Order in the school of Saint Thomas Aquinas, he yet caught a little of the divine infection of the Platonic dream, which made more acceptable to the friends of Lorenzo this dramatic prophet, with his instant speech of doom, of overthrow, of desperate appeal—a type of figure always readily appreciated as a fountain of refreshing contrast by the delicate imaginative children of luxury, thrilled by denunciation. Savonarola was a true revivalist. Florence singing hymns of "holy madness," burning pictures of the nude, and antique busts and manuscripts, illuminated versions of Pulci and Boccaccio, with gauds and cosmetics, lutes, chessboards, and mirrors, in its Bonfires of the Vanities, dancing in three circles of monks and boy-angels, young laymen and ecclesiastics, aged citizens and priests, was merely indulging in some inversion of its customary carnival. No saint, for he was intolerant; unwise, cruel (his penalties for the sins he specially hated were merciless), not even perfectly candid in his belief in his prophecy, Savonarola had all the defects of a naturally solitary soul. He was a recusant to visible beauty from the first, angry at the pomp of the world, shut away in a holy isolation from early years, his mind charged with images of Apocalypse, till the sense of sin heightened to a kind of sublime passion in him.

But from the narrow vessel poured a burning wine that seethed long in the veins of the changeable city, and settled into the lees of melancholia in the hearts of serious and impressionable artists. The average man resented him, his inquisitions, and his intolerably severe interpretation of the reign of "Jesus Christus, Rex Populi"—soon hated his informers and his trying bands of holy children (who certainly are most of the Kingdom of Heaven when they are least conscious of it)—resented him precisely because he was no "Protestant" in the English sense, intent on compromise, escape from authority, and the levelling down and up of religious ideals and practices to a general effect of mere decency.

The Borgia against whom he thundered did not handle him rancorously: the Medici, whom he is popularly supposed to have indicted, do not really appear to have been on bitter terms with the Prior of San Marco. But he could not sustain the superstitious reverence with which the Florentines regarded him after the fulfilment of his prophecies concerning the French. The Piagnoni, his followers, acted unwisely; the Grand Council he advocated worked unfairly; the lower people, deprived of their carnival and their Parlamento, were resentful. The torture and death of the noblest youth in Florence, suspected of Medicean sympathies, was connived at by him. He had political enemies in Milan and Rome. But his executioner was the City of Florence herself, enraged by the dangers of her Republic, frustrated of her expected sensation through the fiasco of the Ordeal by Fire arranged between the champions of the rival orders, a sight anticipated with the cynical amusement of such a crowd as contemplated Peregrinus when he unwillingly com-

pleted his flagrant promise. The three fires in the Piazza under the strangled corpses of Savonarola and his friends image the ugliest moment in Renaissance history, the aberration from civilised ways of the protagonist city of humanism. Yet it was the obscure and primitive passions that Savonarola himself reawakened which in their incalculable recoil proved his destruction.

VII

Along with these warring dreams there is another fierce mediæval survival in magic and astrology, strengthened by the Hebraic studies and even by scientific discovery. It is difficult to realise the shock of these new conceptions. If a Copernican universe were true, why should not anything be true? Especially why should not there be some traffic between things seen and unseen? So you have Cellini's extraordinary scene of evocation in the Coliseum, "all full of devils," in the cloudy light of burning perfumes. And when young Astorre Manfredi was violated and slain by the Borgias in the Mole of Hadrian, what dim dream of elder superstition and the heavy sacrificial head of Antinous may not have confused the crime?

VIII

The men of the Renaissance made its real synthesis in art, most of all in Leonardo, where all its aspirations meet and mingle in triumphally, eternally disturbing perfection. They expressed it architecturally in the dome, as it was builded by Brunelleschi and by Michelangelo. But they desired a spiritual and intellectual solution, as well

as an expression, and sought vainly and restlessly. The soul of the Renaissance is like the great Seleucid who brought philosophers to his court and set *epheboi* in the Temple of Solomon, yet left the banquet to wander through Antioch in the darkness, crowned with roses and lifting the winecup, seeking what he might not find.

Men want Christianity, Platonism, and the Kabbala fused in some new doctrine—for Reuchlin and Pico both eat greedily of the last. But Plato is dearest, with his half-Christian division of soul and body, and the quite Hellenic beauty of his decoration, figures of grave and dreaming youth set here and there in the *Dialogues*, such as Michelangelo used in his painting.

The Council held at Florence to promote the union of Greek and Latin churches had immeasurably strengthened the authority of Plato by the lips of men like Bessarion and Gemistos Pletho, who was the cause of the foundation of the famous Platonic Academy. This body deliberately designed to reconcile antiquity with the Christian religion. Lorenzo presides over it in the Via Larga, in the San Marco garden, in the villas at Careggi and Poggio a Cajano. Its members have symposia to celebrate Plato's birthday and death day, as Alexandrian tradition told them. But they use their apostle strangely, discoursing on Love in sentences drawn from the *Phaedrus* and harmonising the poems of Guido Cavalcanti with the text. Not so unwisely—it is in the tradition. Marsilio Ficino makes his attempt to unite Socrates with Christ, though his preference is evident, and his lamp burns before the bust of Plato, while the young Pico della Mirandola would fain make his universal religion commingled of Platonism Kabbalism, and the Christian

doctrine. But of them more presently. The most daring synthetist was Bruno, and the most unfortunate, for he came too late.

IX

The dualism, the multiplicity rather, of a period that could express itself in natures so different as those of Rodrigo Borgia and Girolamo Savonarola exists not only in opposed persons but in the same natures. I do not speak merely of the natural rhythm of a Renaissance nature, ranging through every climax of passion and wonder to relapse gently and sweetly on penitence and appeal. But these people could be simultaneously Pagan and Christian, and with evident sincerity, probably through some such sort of reconciling imaginative passion as fuses the catholic imagery of *Lycidas*. It is with equal candour that Michelangelo, grown old and weary, draws Ganymedes for Tommaso Cavalieri and pictures of the Passion for Vittoria Colonna.

Olgiati and his friends slay the tyrant of Milan with dreams of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, but also with orisons to the protomartyr of the city. Even towards the end of the great period Boscoli, condemned to die for conspiracy, is torn to pieces between Pagan Philosophy and Savonarolan Christianity—cannot pray for "thinking of that Brutus." Lorenzo, steeped in the new irony, writes hymns as well as Carnival songs. It is not strange: none can appreciate religion like those who contemplate it from without. Gianpaolo Baglioni's superstitious reverence for the person of the Pope prevents him from destroying that enemy when wholly in his power. Cellini is

a homicide and a sensualist, but a devoted son and brother; and can have a radiant vision of the heavenly host in his prison-house. On the other hand, Luini serenely paints a most pagan lady, the Countess of Cellant, whose loves and hates are picturesquely recounted by Bandello, as the Saint Catherine of a church painting.

Contrasts enough in an age that evoked natures so unlike as that of Vittorino da Feltre, that pure humanist, perfectly disciplined and compassionate, who nourished a crowd of poor scholars for mere love of youth and learning, and of him who bears the name of infamy, Pietro Aretino, that *condottière de la plume,* the first journalist, the first blackmailer. The latter made his way from court to court, exploiting the obscene, and perfecting the art of public vituperation, till he found a corrupt and silken nest in Venice. "That notorious ribald of Arezzo, dreaded and yet dear to the Italian courtiers"—even the scrupulous Milton will refer to him, not without a certain man-of-the-world tolerance. There he lived in a palace and a harem, overflowing with precious things wrung from the artists and princes who feared the poison of his pen, had medals made of himself, his mother, and daughter, as if he were king or divinity, and even dreamed of wearing a cardinal's red hat. Yet the chivalrous Castiglione conveyed him to Mantua, Titian was his lifelong friend, and Vittoria Colonna sent him courteous messages, broker and hypocrite as he was: nor is it possible to say that this, the worst product of the Renaissance, was wholly vile, when we read his letters to the great painter, his friend.

Of all those beings compact of desperate and exquisite elements, during the earlier Renaissance Sigismondo Malatesta moves noteworthy, superb imperator riding

Photo by Anderson

COUNT SIGISMONDO MALATESTA BEFORE SAINT SIGISMUND

By Piero della Francesca

(Duomo, Rimini)

among a thicket of little wars. Never was love of love and beauty borne in a vessel of stranger clay. The child of a fierce race, quick with the souls of saints and murderers and fighters, born in the pagan city of Rimini, where the horned moon of Ashtaroth rises over the unchristened sea, he pursues love, scholarship, and war with equal frenzy. Look at the great medals he flung down to posterity, amazing it with the vexed beauty of his curious head, set with its wreathed mass of hair. At fifteen he was a conqueror and a leader of soldiers. Legend said he strangled one wife and poisoned another before he wedded the wise, calm, intellectual Isotta degli Atti, who held his secret soul in her hands all his life long, whom he and his poets sang as the *Honour of Italy,* and who found her apotheosis in the famous Temple. It was also rumoured that he slew a beautiful lady who resisted him, and the Pope accused him of unnatural crime—and yet again he was patient beyond measure before the contradiction of all scholars, and honoured them more elaborately than princes. Florence, desiring to seduce him, sent him Manetti as ambassador, whose talk of Greece and the East soon lured him from diplomacy. Even his enemy, Pius II, said: "He knew all antiquity, was deeply versed in philosophy, and seemed born to accomplish all he undertook." At Rome his friends were Platina and Poggio, at Florence, della Francesca and Alberti. One Pope burned his effigy for his heresies; another gave him the golden rose for fighting in the lands of the infidel, whence indeed at great peril he rescued the ashes of Gemistos Pletho as infinitely precious spoil for his Temple. He served Venice, the Papacy, Aragon, Florence, Milan, with perfect courage, and careless perfidy. His soldiers loved him

for his bravery, his eloquence, his iron body, and his glad comradeship in peril. While sapping and sieging he planned the new Rocca that was to make Rimini impregnable, and wrote letters to della Francesca, Alberti, and Pasti. The triumphs of Petrarch were delicately embroidered in his books, and the Masque of Dionysos swept in music through his dancing town. He was a lord of festival, a magnanimous host. Finally, from his passion and Alberti's genius was born the symbol of Renaissance Italy, the Temple of Rimini, its marble arches encasing the Franciscan basilica, with niches for the ashes of poets and humanists instead of saints, with Isotta graven as the Archangel Michael, and her name lifted over all the pillars embroidered with arts, sciences, signs of the Zodiac, gods half-Greek, half-Persian, mitred Mercury with curled hair, Venus in a swan-chariot, his own devices of fame's trumpeting elephant and love's secret rose, "*Divae Isottae Sacrum.*" The white seabirds flew about it, the little river rushed angrily to the desolate sea. His decorated temple with its passionate inscription stood defiant, and keeps his glory still.

X

All these contrasting passions wrought out a strange type. There is no mistaking a Renaissance head, moulded, disquieted by conflicts of sense and soul. Sometimes the elements are graciously liquefied—flow into lineaments steeped in a lovely dissolvent dream of gods and angels, as in the drawings of Leonardo and his school, or in the languid beauty of the young men disposed about the frescoes, or in the listening music-haunted faces of

Giorgione. More melancholy troubles the irregular grace of Botticelli's folk. The medals tell a still truer story, presenting, as they actually were, the Renaissance tyrants —violent, "excessive," convulsed, yet with a tortured beauty, and a fascination of strangeness, the charm of a body shaken by an indomitable spirit, a wasting disturbing fever of curiosity that sets its own sigil on an aspect far removed from Greek perfection—or any kind of norm.

Contrasts that amaze! But they were a beautiful people, and they made beauty. They had courage and courtesy—could break the world in pieces, and make it over again in a fiery and sweet image. They were dangerous, terrible, disastrous; but they knew how to endure the delight and excitement of the spectacle of life, how to obtain by an unreserving expense of the soul those absolute values of passionate experience which are the only excuse for the infinite and intolerable anguish of existence. That human beings can rise so high and sink so low, can be at once so like the beasts, so like the gods, is a meditation that raises the vitality of all brave thinkers. And no age so firmly believed with Plato that "the soul that hath most of worth shall come to birth as a poet, lover, philosopher, musician, or artist."

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Life of Joachim of Flora	1145-1202
Inauguration of Order of Saint Francis	1209
End of Crusade against the Albigenses	1229
Death of the Emperor Frederic II	1250
Life of Vittorino dei Rambaldoni da Feltre	1378-1446
Persecution of Fratricelli	1426-1449

	A.D.
Council of Florence	1438-1439
Sigismondo Malatesta assumes Power	1432
Foundation of Temple of Rimini	1446
John Hunyadi at Belgrade	1456
Execution of Toscaro	1457
Pico della Mirandola lives	1463-1494
Death of Leone Battista Alberti	1472
Rodrigo Borgia becomes Pope	1492
Execution of Savonarola	1498
Pietro Aretino	1492-1555
Jubilee Year in Rome	1500
Death of Gaston de Foix	1512

CHAPTER IV

The Scholar

I

It is difficult for the present day, contemptuous of Greek and Latin as injurious to commercial success, carelessly dragging its own living languages towards unprecedented extremes of poverty and brutality, to understand at all that the recovery of two perfected forms of human speech could convulse even merchant princes with joyous excitement. No warrior lord now carries home from distant lands the ashes of one who knew intricately the Platonic doctrine and the Platonic language, to shrine them like a saint's in his temple, writing above in ardent Latin that so he manifests "the great love wherewith he burns for all learned men." Not now do kingly Progresses, and embassies, and all haughty ceremonials imperiously require that they should be adorned with elaborate Latinity as well as with music of hautboys and cloth of gold.

The Renaissance people accepted the classical languages as vehement angels of Apocalypse, unsealing new Paradises. Latin and Greek were the guides to Olympos and Elysium, to Athens and Imperial Rome, to the islands "where Achilles races in his beauty," and to symposia interrupted by Alcibiades with a revel of flute-players. The study of them was rightly humanism, *litterae humaniores,* the research into completed forms of living,

lucid, and exquisite, and strange. The Renaissance Faustus can imagine no more archetypal rapture than bridal with Helen of Troy, and all his joys are like:

> "Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
> Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?"

Antiquity stole into Italy like a flush through the blood, an element of life. These people moved, lived, loved, hated, ate, drank, took their pleasures, and built their cities differently because of it. The story of the opening of the tomb of Julia, and the love that consumed all gazers for an unperished and ornamental beauty unlike the beauty of living folk, is authentic in its essence.

II

Some types of Renaissance scholar are obviously unendurable. One must remember the extraordinary value attached by this age of highly individualised people to mere language. The power of beautiful discourse, a comely sensibility in the use of words, might avert wars, crystallise treaties, allure great condottieri. Princes and princesses were trained to Latin or Italian orations. Conversation was the highest form of intellectual pleasure: in dialogues and symposia man's consciousness of himself and his universe flowered and fruited. A Renaissance person would indeed have smiled at the twentieth-century notion of consistently crediting all who are too lazy or inert to clarify their minds in speech with "sound business qualities," or "statesmanlike moderation," or some similar negation of virtue. To them, words were not play-

things for pedants or specialists, dead desiccated trophies of vanished springs, closed in a herbarium; they were the signs of the articulate souls of lovers, children, fighters, people with hungering eyes and ears and nostrils and hands, delicate, gallant and glittering persons; they were the counters in deadly games of love and hate, sudden flowers of immortal moments, triumphal medals for the history of the soul. They knew that language was inseparable from processes of thinking, feeling, imagining, and that its violent endeavours intensify and complicate human character. Consider Elizabethan English—Shakespearean English—some of those flaming knots of expression when speech and thought are wrung hard in a deadly duel of embracing love, flung each on each in desperate effort to possess all the other has, more than the other has, till both, astonished, surrender their ultimate secrets. Consider the intellectual energy of a world that calmly accepted Latin for a universal language.

It is this sense of the importance of language, of the conquest of new domains of psychology by the delicate strong texture and the lovely breathing of Greek, the conquering liturgical sound of Latin, all dark violet and incense, that made popes and princes endure so much from the fierce enthusiasts of the letter, the philologers who scolded and plundered and lived scandalously, yet bore intense discomforts and perilous journeys and bitter heart-burning in the search for manuscripts and the diffusion of the heavenly tongue of Plato, the earthlier yet most seductive speech of Catullus.

For there were many types of scholars—the grammarians like Filelfo and Poggio, the real humanists who entered, labouring also, into their labours, and found

new ideals of living, like Niccoli, or Bessarion, or the patron princes, the philosophers who tried to re-create the heavens according to the rediscovered Plato, the educators like Vittorino, the amateurs like the warrior nobles and the great ladies. These again flourished through different epochs of revival—one period, initiated by Petrarch, of impassioned individual search and effort under individual patrons, such as Cosimo de' Medici, Alfonso of Naples, Nicolas V; a second, when, protected by these patrons, the "Grecians" stole or stormed at last into the Universities, distrustful, reluctant as these were, settling themselves at first more firmly on their definite bases of law and medicine. The second era of triumph and enthusiasm owed much to the peculiar condition of this very University teaching of humanism—classes in a state of flux, free and ductile, in which pupils and teachers could both give and take; for men who had their *laurea* came to sit alongside those who had but newly turned their gaze on a scholar's life, when some wandering Greek scholar like Manuel Chrysoloras occupied awhile the lecturer's chair. When Musurus taught in Padua, Erasmus tells us, Raphael Regio, a professor seventy years old, came like a blithe boy through the sharp mornings at seven o'clock to hear the Greek literature expounded. At no time perhaps, since the days of Socrates, could youth and age live so sweetly together, and it is because of this enthusiastic intercourse between the young, that could if they knew, and the old, that would if they could, that Renaissance personality at its best is pitched in a key so penetrating—these catching from the old some consciousness of their own divine moment and its opportunities, and so realising it more pensively and graciously, those

recovering some of the enthusiasm of the unwearied vision in their smiling contemplation of awakening life. So at least the portrait painters reveal it, in the serious dreaming beauty of Giorgione's young men, the possessed maturity of Raphael's and Titian's magnificent aristocrats.

The third era was that of the Academies—when the "first fine careless rapture" had a little subsided, when the critical intelligence was reasserting itself, and at Rome, at Florence, at Naples, groups of sympathetic people met to discuss in some intimacy points of style—style already somewhat dangerously indifferent to its substance.

III

It is as well to recall the chief events in the Revival of Learning, that part of the Renaissance which exists behind and above its political change and even its creative passion. "Humanism" meant a change in the spiritual outlook of humanity. Learning had not been lost in the Middle Ages: Benedictine and Celtic monasteries had enclosed the tradition through the agonies of the ancient civilisations. Monastic schools, such as the Cathedral School at Chartres, and that of the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer, took their scholars not vainly through trivium and quadrivium. But the recovery of the classical literatures meant the realisation of a point of view not necessarily Christian, the discovery of a smiling world unshadowed by the monkish ideal, the notion of the human personality as a good in itself. It meant tolerance, amenity, irony, and, ultimately, after much expiation, a social pity of outlook quite different from the intense individual compassions of Christendom. It im-

plied recognition of all the claims, the splendours, the wisdoms that exist outside the Christian ideal, and a heightened sense of the value of a life that is in itself a heaven and hell, not the mere narthex of a dream-built immortality.

Dante, in whom the adoration of antiquity was conscious and impassioned, died in 1321. Leo X, who "enjoyed the Papacy" with such love of Latin verse, expired in 1521. Between these two dates the great wave of humanism rose and fell.

Petrarch was the first true humanist, with his culture of personality as an ideal, his new distrust of Aristotle, his eagerness for manuscript texts, his thorough conquest of Latin, his imagination of Greeks and Romans as actual human beings. His efforts were happily combined with Boccaccio's, whose desperate endeavours to recover Homeric Greek, by the help of a disagreeable and uncertain tutor, seem as pathetic as his pilgrimage to the Monastery of Monte Cassino, where he found priceless texts rotting in a hayloft, bereft of their margins that the monks might make psalters and amulets. The hunt for manuscripts was in full cry; the hunger for actual Hellenic speech had found its food before the fall of Constantinople let loose a stream of dispossessed Greeks to strengthen the appetite of Italy. The earliest wandering humanist was an Italian, Giovanni di Conversino da Ravenna, Petrarch's pupil, the best Latinist of his time, who went from city to city, a communicator and an enthusiast, casting the love of antiquity into disseminating souls like those of Guarino and Vittorino, restless minds like those of Barbaro, Filelfo, Marsuppini, Poggio Brac-

ciolini, Leonardo Bruni, Ambrogio Traversari, Ognibene da Vicenza, Pier Paolo Vergerio.

In 1396 Manuel Chrysoloras, who had previously travelled through the peninsula imploring help for doomed Byzantium, made Florence the capital of the New Learning by accepting the invitation to occupy the chair of Greek in the studium there—the first Greek chair in Europe. Even in Constantinople he had been a fountain of Greek for Italy, visited by impassioned pilgrims like Guarino of Verona and Filelfo. Florentine citizens like Palla Strozzi and Cosimo de' Medici were eager patrons of the scholars. Between 1415 and 1417 Poggio discovered texts of Cicero, Valerius Flaccus, Lucretius, Plautus: the *Institutions* of Quintilian he found in the Abbey of St Gall. In 1433 Aurispa revealed Pliny's *Panegyric,* and imparted to the Florentine Niccolò Niccoli the manuscripts containing work of Sophocles, Æschylus, and Apollonius Rhodius, that passed into the Laurentian library. Niccolò Niccoli (1363-1437), by his careful study of manuscripts, established a conception of textual criticism. His passion for manuscripts and Cosimo's generosity resulted in the foundation of the first public library. Cosimo, who had helped him freely during his lifetime, relieved his legacy of precious books from the demands of creditors. He placed four hundred texts in the Convent of St Mark, and enriched both this collection and that at Fiesole with a noble bounty. Lorenzo continued in his ways. Federigo of Montefeltro had a magnificent library at Urbino: it was he who "would have been ashamed to own a printed book." The Vatican library was made precious chiefly by Nicolas V, and Sixtus IV, of whom Platina was the haughty librarian.

Venice, lagging far behind in humanism, took long to house worthily the skilfully chosen collection left by Cardinal Bessarion to San Marco.

With Niccoli flourished such friends of humanism as Leonardo Bruni, writer of Florentine history, the Salutati, Giannozzo Manetti, the fluent Latin Orator of the City of the Lily, and Carlo Marsuppini, the lover of Greek and of Plato. Perhaps the sessions of the Council concerning the union of the Greek and Latin Churches had most power in determining the quality of Florentine humanism. For thither came Gemistos Pletho, the initiate of Platonic myth and the symbolism of Plotinus, also Bessarion, Platonist too, but willing to be a Latin Cardinal. It was the enchanting voice of Gemistos that persuaded Cosimo de' Medici to found the famous Platonic Academy, and train Marsilio Ficino from his childhood to be the high priest of a cult ennobled by Lorenzo, Pico della Mirandola, Poliziano, and Michelangelo.

Meanwhile Guarino of Verona was translating Petrarch on education, and interesting himself in Greek as an instrument of developing youth; from him Vittorino da Feltre learnt his Greek, starting his school about 1446. In 1427 Francesco Filelfo had brought from Constantinople the works of some forty Greek authors: his quarrel with the Medici and other Florentine devotees of learning had sent him, angry and arrogant, to sow his knowledge in Rome and Milan. Theodore of Gaza, George of Trebizond, with whom Cardinal Bessarion broke a lance concerning Plato, John Argyropoulos, Demetrius Chalcondylas, and the Lascaris family, besides Manuel Chrysoloras, were Greeks all at work in Italy before the fall of their capital. Poggio initiated a new

period of conquest by writing Latin as a living coloured language. When Valla became papal scriptor under Nicolas V, humanism was definitely recognised by the Church as a power to be conciliated, for Valla had attacked the mediæval notion of Aristotle, and denounced the *Donation of Constantine.* True, under Calixtus III and Pius II learning suffered eclipse in Rome; and Paul II tortured the Platonists of the Roman Academy founded by Pomponius Lætus, for which crime against humanism Platina, himself a sufferer, took a burning vengeance in words. But Sixtus IV opened the Vatican library to scholars, and, if Alexander VI was more pagan than humanist, and Julius II preferred art to scholarship, the Ciceronian Bembo, Sadoleto, Inghirami, and Vida ornamented only too consciously the golden court of Leo X.

By that time the period of rapturous discovery and the evocation of Hellenism from the unconscious cells of the monasteries was over. Still, it was an event when the Pope acquired six books of Tacitus from the monastery of Corvey; and his confession of faith in humanism, as expressed in the brief concerning the issue of that work by Beroaldo, is one of the loftiest and sincerest expressions of its emotion. This is the moment also when the letter of Raphael, as Inspector-General of Antiquities, pleads for protection and survey of the monuments of Rome as an essential part of humanism, hitherto somewhat neglected, though Pius II had stayed their destruction by a bull, and Poggio Bracciolini had read history from their ruined magnificence. It was now, however, the age of academies like that of Jovianus Pontanus at Naples, deliberating lazily on matters of style in itself.

The hour of the ruin of scholarship under Clement VII was at hand; when the dreadful treatise, *On the Infelicity of the Scholar,* an infelicity proceeding through fear, envy, wrath, suicide, torture, murder, was to issue from the pen of Piero Valeriano. Reuchlin and Erasmus were to carry the prestige of learning to the North.

IV

Florence was the nursery of Hellenism. Later, Rome absorbed and nourished many great scholars, but always strengthened rather the Latin strain. Venice became conscious of humanism late in the Renaissance, though Aldo Manuccio and his Aldine Academy played a noble and necessary part. Naples, under the famous Alfonso, whose emblem was an open book, sheltered a knot of elegant and daring stylists, like Valla of the *Elegantiae,* and Beccadelli of the notorious *Hermaphroditus,* a frank exposition of the animalism that grew rank with the lilies of Platonism. Many little states like Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino, and Rimini were pulsing stars of humanism.

It is a surprising masquerade, this confusion of scholars preparing the way for the return of Dionysos. You see Francesco Filelfo with his beautiful Greek wife, of the house of Chrysoloras, loved no less for the perfection of her speech than for herself, brought (villainously, said his enemies) with lovely heathen books out of Constantinople; Poggio ravening after manuscripts, slinging swift Latin at his adversaries; John Lascaris searching out manuscripts for Lorenzo on Mount Athos; Valla mocking the Inquisition from the side of his royal protector; Bessarion concealing under his cardinal's Roman scarlet the

pride of a soul constant notwithstanding to an older tradition, yearning back to crescented Constantinople; Pico, with the unearthly light over his visionary head, appearing suddenly to Ficino, whose lamp burns unfailing before the bust of Plato; Sigismondo Malatesta bringing the ashes of Gemistos Pletho, who waited long by Sparta in the hope of some tangible recognisable return of the gods, to rest in Rimini; Vittorino with piercing eyes, sandalled feet, leading the soul and body of youth to a ringing rhyme in his Joyous Gard; Alfonso of Naples reverently receiving from Venice a bone of Livy as a holy relic, and Leo X, treasuring a tusk of the Boar of Calydon. Some typical figures should be more closely considered.

V

Those who give the keys are the philologers, the grammarians, the commentators and discoverers of texts, the slaves of the Lamp and Ring of Hellenism. They were a motley and disorderly crowd; but the Renaissance was conscious of their value. From town to town they passed like spoilt children, living a disparate dual life of study and intrigue, rent with wrath and envy, creating in their quarrels an incredible tradition of venom and brutality, obtaining their ends by ribald Latin satire or vacuous Latin panegyric, oddly immune to the amenities of the palaces of which they were the unconscious doorkeepers—doorkeepers indeed, servile in their vices, arrogant in their demands. Poggio, the lively Latinist serving the Papal Chancery, while freely admiring Jerome of Prague, and ruthlessly satirising the clergy, fighting

verbal duels for Florence, unearthing manuscripts in obscure convents, is "ever a fighter." Laurentius Valla, in many ways the most interesting of the group, a man of sceptical mind, an exponent of the anti-monastic ideal, an audible and deliberate critic of Christianity, who dared to expose the forged Decretals, yet became Apostolic Writer to Nicolas V because that Pontiff desired the author of the *Elegantiae* to adorn his humanist court. Take, however, Francesco Filelfo for type. Born in the March of Ancona, he studied in the half-mediæval University of Padua. In 1417 he was teaching in Venice, in 1419 he was at Constantinople in Venetian employment. There he learned Greek from John Chrysoloras, and searched for manuscripts, returning with a treasure of texts and a bride of the Chrysoloras family. In 1427 he professed Greek in Venice. Thence he passed to Bologna, thence to Florence, where he lectured on Greek and Latin four times a day during the week, besides explaining Dante to the people in the Duomo on Sundays. He quarrelled furiously with the Medici family and with the other Florentine scholars, and bore the scar of an assassin's sword. As his lampoons were most furious when Cosimo was in exile, he had to leave Florence when the Medici returned, and went to decorate the Court of Milan with his Latinity. He was invited to Rome when he was twenty-seven—only to eat the bread of discontent; and at last procured his recall to Florence, where he died soon after his arrival. A bright restless snake of Italy, he loved luxury, and stung where it was denied him. His satires on Cosimo and the Florentines, the pieces of his famous quarrel with Poggio, reach the extremes of invective: he was envious, sensual, heartsick for adulation, much of a

blackmailer. Yet he dominated courts and princes, and had his triumphal progresses like a king.

But the best humanists were those whose lives were patterns in the web of learning, who loved the new literatures for their own sake, and gladly gave their time and treasure to that sweet service as private persons, or as state servants. The Florence of Cosimo was full of them —Leonardo Bruni, grave and majestic, a lord of diplomatic Latin, buried with princely pomp; Carlo Marsuppini, graciously entombed by the art of Desiderio da Settignano also in Santa Croce, a man of marvellous memory, melancholy and sceptical; Giannozzo Manetti, the fluent ambassador; Ambrogio Traversari, the monk made general of the Camaldolese Order, considerably distracted by his diverse longings. Best known was Niccolò de' Niccoli, who gave himself up to the life of an appreciator, priding himself with a lovable affectation on writing nothing. He knew how to collate the manuscripts he hungered for; his house was fair with the marbles, coins, vases, graven gems that were cognate with these. He went stately, clad in crimson; his table was arrayed with the delicate linen and beautiful old dishes that he felt necessary to the ritual of the appreciation of Hellenic beauty; and he drank wine from crystal cups. All he had he spent on Grecian and Latin things; lent them freely to those who were like-minded; and left them so that all lovers of antiquity might make them their own.

A later, more coloured humanist is Angelo Poliziano, who charged the scholar's patience with imaginative and emotional qualities of a high kind. The impassioned friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, he seconded musically his desire to revive the tradition of vernacular poetry with

the melodious stanza of *La Giostra*, and the sudden lyrics of the *Orfeo*. He learnt Latin from Landino, Greek from Argyropoulos, philosophy from Ficino. In his youth he translated the Iliad and was the exponent of Catullus. Before he was thirty he lectured on the humanities with grace and charm, men like Reuchlin, Grocyn, Linacre, being among his hearers. Poliziano's taste was catholic; his Latin verse in poems like the *Sylvae* or the *Ambra* is fresh and sincere. He was the tutor of Lorenzo's family; his difficulties with the narrow-minded Clarice Orsini, Lorenzo's Roman wife, did not shake the understanding of the friends. His happiest hours were spent among the leaves of Fiesole within reach of Pico and Ficino. One tradition has it that he died singing in an ecstasy of Platonic love.

The Renaissance ideal of education compelled some communication, as quick and delicate as possible, of this vital New Learning to children and adolescents. The mediæval notion of education as a training in life, by which the gently born boy was initiated in his devoirs in the stately household of a secular or sacred prince as page, squire, knight, blending with his own enthusiastic and adventurous temper the smiling sophistication of a châtelaine, the various wisdom of his lord, was admirable in its way, avoiding, like Greek and Renaissance ideals, that difficult hiatus between boyhood and early manhood which is nowadays so much more obvious. But the limitation of training as lover, singer, warrior, or prelate, seemed now outworn. Still the same keynote, the only possible keynote, persisted—that of communicating to youth the beauty of the past, so that life might be heightened and enriched thereby, and the original charm of

personality provoked by the kindling suggestions of antiquity. Communication, not imposition! The children were not to be slaves of some dried dogma, but neophytes of a ritual which initiated them into secrets not of past or future but of eternity. Greece appeared to have shaped the loveliest youth, to those eyes enamoured of Ion, Charmides, and Critias; and so to Greece the Renaissance people turned. The end of youthful education was still the art of living, not the acquisition of money, nor even of thrones.

Some of the experiments were of a naïve delightfulness, as when Leo X summoned John Lascaris from Paris to superintend a gymnasium of ten noble youths brought from Greece by Marcus Musurus to be trained in a perfectly Hellenic fashion. Earlier far, shortly after 1418, Guarino of Verona, who had learned Latin from Giovanni of Ravenna, and Greek in the house of Manuel Chrysoloras in Constantinople, and had opened the first humanistic school in Venice, was educating the young princes of Ferrara, Leonello, and Borso, for their father Niccolò d'Este. Other princely pupils came to share their days; and the master welcomed many poor scholars in his own house. Leonello and Borso were magnificent and learned dukes, the harbourers of scholars and artists. But Guarino loved better to make a humanist than a man. Not so his famous successor, Vittorino Rambaldoni da Feltre, who possessed in perfection the sweet magic of exciting the spirit of youth, and persuading it towards the haughty and fastidious disciplines of humanistic life. He was educated at Padua, becoming an accomplished Latinist under Giovanni di Conversino and Barzizza, then studied mathematics in hard conditions, learning so the

profound sympathies of the scholarly and refined soul that has endured unembittered the sordid yoke of poverty. He taught in Padua and in Venice, where he learned Greek from Guarino; and held a chair of Rhetoric in Padua, finally accepting the unconditional invitation of the Marquis of Mantua, Gian Francesco Gonzaga, to educate his children. His life thereafter was devoted to the fair crowd in La Giocosa, the house given him in Mantua. So selfless was Vittorino that even the lively philologers, even Niccoli, Poggio, and Filelfo, found no abuse for him. He had an attractive air; and much riding, dancing, fencing, had made him very supple and graceful. His piercing glance could startle the tears to the eyes of an offending pupil, no word being spoken. By many intellectual, imaginative, and physical disciplines, he held his way through sensuous Italy as pure as Hippolytus. His cloudy steed never overthrew the other in the serene chariot-race of his soul.

Besides the children of the Marquis, Lodovico, Carlo, Gianlucido, Alessandro, and the girl Cecilia, his "house of joy" received other princely pupils, like Federigo of Urbino, for the Mantuan was the school of Italian aristocracy. Others came, the parents paying as they could. But Pisanello's medal, of which the obverse shows the bleeding pelican, tells the truth of Vittorino, who made himself a beggar for the love of youth, receiving, feeding, clothing, and rearing side by side with the young princes as many of the brilliant poor as he could find means to support.

Vittorino's ideal of education was to maintain a happy equilibrium between the spiritual and the physical. La Giocosa, refusing luxury, but frescoed with playing

Photo by Alinari

MEDAL OF VITTORINO DA FELTRE

By Vittorio Pisano

(National Museum, Florence)

children, lay in a pleasant garden; and the life of the pupils was interwound with the daily miracles of meadow and river and little hill and shaded walks. They went a-pleasuring too, in the green places of Goito. All forms of bodily exercise making for gracious and dignified motions—riding, swimming, fencing—were inextricably part of the course. As for the intellectual discipline, Latin classics seemed good to him, read eagerly, as live matters, not pedantically, though with no slovenly neglect of grammar—poetry, oratory, Roman history, and the ethics of stoicism. Greek also he gave—Plutarch, Plato, Aristophanes, Æschylus. Some mathematics and geometry were taught, elements of astronomy, and natural history as it was known. Recitation and reading aloud were much practised, for the love of good speaking and grace of address, and with a sense of the value of memory we now too much disregard. As for music, he seems to have held the antique distinction, permitting the severer kind, with choral singing and dancing. But each pupil was considered in himself, not forced in any way. Philosophy was taught to a chosen few. All went to Mass in the Duomo, for Vittorino's ideal was not so unlike that of Walter Pater's, in his sense of the need of lovely rhythm and ritual, and the triumphal Panathenaic beauty of "ascesis."

The final state of the scholar is perhaps that of the philosopher, trying to use his knowledge to solve the riddle of life and the relation of the soul to God. The philosophy of the Renaissance was little more than an impassioned and confused dream of Plato. It was too dramatic an age to build enduring philosophy, much as it loved to descant on metaphysical themes.

"Cold as a mountain in its star-pitched tent
Stood high Philosophy, less friend than foe:
Whom self-caged Passion, from its prison-bars
Is always watching with a wondering hate.
Not till the fire is dying in the grate,
Look we for any kinship with the stars."

Its thinkers, moreover, less frankly Pagan than its artists and princes, were haunted even more than they by the need of synthesis, by the longing to reconcile their beloved New Learning with the sumptuous and comforting Church, for whose ceremonies their Italian natures had an almost physical craving. So they tried to make a new religion, not yet having explored sufficiently to discover that a religion is an organic and vital growth like a language, and that no deliberate assembly of the most cultivated intellects can contrive to shape one, since they are unable to put the core of primeval fear and longing in its heart.

But they did their best, for Plato, still more Plotinus, knew that the ultimate need of the human soul is an hour in the House of Ecstasy. Plato was wisdom and passion and myth, the great reconciler of reason and imagination. The lectures of Gemistos Pletho at the Council of the Churches first roused the love of Plato in Florence. This strange celebrant of the past, who dreamed indeed of raising the ancient gods, who taught that the Olympians were the Eternal Ideas, the Titans the Ideas in form and matter, who was drunken with Alexandrian lore, and seemed to excited hearers Socrates or Plato himself reincarnate, so enthralled Cosimo that he founded the Platonic Academy, and dedicated Marsilio Ficino,

the son of his physician, to be its hierophant. Marsilio entered the Medicean house as a child, studied under John Argyropoulos, loved music, poetry, science, philosophy, Greek. He translated the Hermetic writings, finished his translations of Plato in 1480, and, moved by the arrival of Pico, set to work on Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite. He was a musician always, for music flourishes with philosophy, the emotional with the intellectual synthesis, the resolution of the pearl in the wine. Like a rhapsodist he would commit his visions to the lyre. So Ficino, uncritical scholar, whose curious sweetness of temper emanates through his hopes, tried for twenty-five years to reconcile Plato and Moses, Socrates and Christ. At forty he was a canon in San Lorenzo; and he died believing in both religions.

Pico della Mirandola remains in our imaginations as a typically Renaissance human being. For he was scholar, prince, poet, philosopher, lover, saint. The medal of his head, bearing on the obverse the three antique Graces of Siena, is singularly appropriate. A scholar indeed, for whom all antiquity had to be resumed in human experience, whose learning became the flame of an imaginative dream, a threefold light in the more coloured and rapturous world of the soul! What if he mistook the divine nature of myth and symbol, and was betrayed into desolation by the wandering fires of allegory? "The Earl of Mirandola, and a great lord in Italy," with his eager grey eyes, and yellow hair, and beautiful person, seeking God through all the fantastical thickets of human surmise, and lying early dead in the Dominican habit in the cloister of San Marco, lapsing from the complications of

philosophy to the repose of Savonarola's simple evangel, is an image the world will not easily forget.

Nobly born, he studied canon law at Bologna when he was fourteen. Robed as an Apostolic Protonotary, he passed seven years in the schools of France and Italy, collecting a library, studying philosophy, theology, literature, Greek, Latin, and also Hebrew, Chaldee and Arabic, for the exotic impassioned element in him demanded Asia as well as Greece. He had acquired great fame as a disputant when he appeared to Ficino in Florence, about twenty years old, a slender emotional figure, with "something divine" in his face, not yet quite free from the passion of love, very lucid and eloquent of speech. Then he happened on the Kabbala, and dreamed his reconciliation of all the religions—Platonism, Christianity, and Kabbalism—since Christ is revealed most certainly by esoteric philosophies. After an interlude at Paris, and a return to Florence, he passed to Rome, challenging the world to dispute with him on nine hundred themes. But there was question of heresy, for it was amazing enough to hear "that Magia and the Kabbala were the surest paths to Christianity," especially when other suspect opinions upheld that mortal sins of finite duration deserved only temporal punishment, tried to save Origen from Hell, and threw doubts on transubstantiation: and so the mental tournament was ended. At Rome, however, he met and influenced Reuchlin.

Pico wrote his *Apologia*; but it was some time before he was at last acquitted by Alexander VI—strange absolver! His later life was passed chiefly in Florence in gentleness and charity; and he died at thirty-two, all his Italian love-songs burned under the influence of Savona-

rola, who loved him, yet delivered his fair soul to purgatorial flames because he could not bring himself to the complete monastic vow.

There is no rational satisfaction in Pico's curious dream, whereby earthly and heavenly are reconciled by a system of "correspondences." But great beauty resides in the mood of one for whom the whole universe breaks into triple flame, fire and water in the terrestrial world, sun and moon in the celestial, seraphic and cherubic intelligences in the super-celestial. His tolerance was unfailing. He could worship Plato without despising Aristotle, discern the merits of the fallen schoolmen, write a commentary on Benivieni's *Canzone della Amore celeste e divino,* subtle and untiring in its meditations on the nature of God, yet say smilingly to Poliziano, "But see, my Angelo, what madness possesses us! Love God while we are in the body we rather may, than either define or know him." And the challenge of his God to man is part of the lyric of the spiritual pride of the Renaissance. "I created thee a being neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal, only that thou mightest be free to shape and to overcome thyself."

The complete revolt from religion to philosophy is found in Giordano Bruno, who sought for Unity, yet declared it could not be found apart from things. God is the universal substance: God is the principle that is in things, yet distinct from them, the efficient and final cause, the beginning, middle, and end, eternal and infinite, the living active intelligence realising Himself in the varied forms of activity that constitute individual things. But what determines involves somewhat in which the determination is expressed; this other, which is the same, be-

ing matter. The Universe is therefore a living cosmos, the end being the perfect realisation of variously graded forms. Unity sundering into the multiplicity of things is *monas monadum,* each thing being monas or self-existent. The thinking monad of the soul of man, as a portion of divine life, is immortal, and its highest function is the contemplation of divine unity under the complex of things.

But, since God is in all, good and evil interfuse, are like a play of colours to the perfected soul, in touch with the eternal. So the old mediæval heresies that emanate from the ecstatic half-heathen Dove-dream of the Holy Ghost stir uneasily in the Pantheism of Bruno, the old recurrent notion that when the soul finds the state of Grace, all things are gracious with which it communicates, that modes of action and emotion sinful to the uninitiate suffer a contamination of spiritual sweetness from the sweetness of the soul that has become divine; that the illuminated mind is "indifferent" to distinctions.

VI

Humanism is perhaps most beautiful for us in the young nobles who wore it as a grace, as a charm, as a perfume, who carried it as a flower, or awoke it like a lute through the crowded bright deadly business of their lives, the youths who were the real "amateurs," who left their loves and dice and wine-cups, the historian tells us, to sit wide-eyed where Filelfo or Poggio expounded the Greek word, such was Piero de' Pazzi, remarked by Niccolò Niccoli in the Florentine street because of his beauty, and rebuked that he, "the son of such a man," and so

comely, should want the noble ornament of a knowledge of Latin, and should let the leaves of youth drift down the wind without distilling some deathless virtue to make sweet his age. Whereupon the young man left his play and gave his heart to scholarship.

These young nobles, Leonello d'Este, Alberto Pio, Novello Malatesta, lord of Cesena, had the sense of Greek and Latin, not only as things beautiful objectively, like their pictures and graven stones, because of the ethereal certitudes of the one, or the purple cadences of the other, but as webs steeped in the passion, mystery, ambiguity of life. They saw them like vases of impeccable outline containing philtres of love and death. And, if they frankly delighted in the paradoxes of the great civilisations, if they chose to consider certain states and conditions of emotion inseparably involved with the poetry and the Platonism and the fair figures, if they loved the riot and satyric comedy as well as the solemn and beautiful tragic procession in the Theatre of Dionysos, we must remember that their courage, their enthusiasm, and their curiosity were of necessity more feverish and unhesitating than ours.

Nor let the older amateurs be forgotten, the princes who were fit for princedom—Alfonso of Aragon, to whom classic authors were read daily while he fought the Sforza, who loved the relics of antiquity with the romantic adoration of a mediæval nun for her Christ; Cosimo the wise; Federigo of Urbino, and many others. They all had the better part, however much they may also have had of the worse. What if all this hellenising was uncritical and often inaccurate? They caught their living glimpses of beauty, a breath of asphodel, the flash

of white racers in Elysian light, the composure of perfect pillars over a wine-dark sea.

VII

A word as to an auxiliary company!

The manuscripts, once found, were coveted; and at first the eager armies of *scrittori* (who knew Greek), and of *copisti*, were permitted to multiply them. Written on fair parchment, clasped curiously in rich covers, books kept their sacred character, and maintained it far into the anxiously scribed anthologies of the seventeenth century. But Vespasiano da Bisticci, who centred the manuscript trade in Florence, saw the decline of his art, for the invention of printing was one of the many ironical achievements by which the Renaissance both perfected and undid itself. The first printed books maintained the tradition of beauty and dignity; and the first printers of classics, like the Stephani in Paris and the Manucci in Venice, were scholars and devotees.

German printers had begun work at Subiaco and Rome. There were presses in Venice, Milan (1469), Florence (1471), printing Latin and Greek. But Aldo Manuccio gave his life with both hands to the perfect printing of the literatures he loved, so that many instead of few might feed their souls on them. Born in 1450 at Sermonetta, student under Baptisto Guarini, the author of a reasonable Latin grammar, tutor to the young lords of Carpi, he formed the ideal of printing all the Greek masterpieces; and his princely pupil, Alberto Pio, helped him liberally to his end. In 1490 he settled at Venice, and patiently built up the harmonious Greek-speaking house-

hold from which his books were issued. The script of the Cretan Musurus yielded the pattern of his type: ink and paper were anxiously purified. Yet the volumes cost but a shilling or two of our money, so that we need hardly pride ourselves unduly on our lightly materialised reprints. In 1493 he issued the *Hero and Leander* of Musæus; 1499 was celebrated by the publication of that famous book *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili,* by Francesco Colonna, a curious half-mediæval, half-Renaissance volume bathed in a Neo-platonic charm, not unworthy of its form; and he printed steadily till he achieved his great edition of Plato in 1513. The Neacademia of Hellenists comforted him; his Cretan friend, Marcus Musurus, sustained and aided him; Erasmus visited him to superintend the issue of his *Adagia*; he rejoiced in the glory of all scholars. He collated his manuscripts; he lived soberly, yet amassed no wealth; he criticised his text, he shaped his pages beautifully; amid war and convulsion he wrought patiently, printing on—Cicero, Sophocles, Herodotus, Ovid, Lucian, Bessarion, Euripides, the Early Fathers, Livy, Pindar, Bembo, Herodotus, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Colonna, Catherine of Siena, Lucretius—till he died in 1515. Rome might be endangered, Venice might totter. He was quiet, "hastening slowly," with the rare conviction that what he did was a positive good whatever might befall, and that destiny had surely appointed his labour. There is something extraordinarily beautiful in his persistent devotion to an idea, and something extraordinarily bitter in the irony whereby the craft that began so nobly has become the main engine of destroying that beauty of human expression it was so passionately in-

tended to cherish by the Master of the Anchor and the Dolphin.

VIII

Wedded with printing was the scrupulous craft of bookbinding, wherein the least dishonesty is fatal to beauty. The Saracen cordonniers in Spain, and the cuir-ciselé workers of south-east Germany brought "Gothic" bookbinding to a gorgeous climax. The "dorures à petits fers" of the covers of the Valois period, considered by many the finest expression of Renaissance bookbinding, began in emulation of the gleaming Italian volumes that Charles VIII dragged home from Milan and Naples with other sumptuous loot.

Books whose script lay within their covers like relics in their reliquaries, bredes of great goldsmith work to glow like more jewels in a queen's treasury or to enter into the splendour about the High Altar, books built preciously for tokens of amity between princes, like the softly illumined psalter intended as a love-gift from the fantastic cardinal, Ippolito de' Medici, to that fair chastity called Giulia Gonzaga, and clasped by Cellini into a baroque bauble offered by a dissembling pope to a wary emperor, there had been and still would be. But now there were more books, and of a lovelier simplicity in their daisied or lilied coats. The printers set up their presses in the great marts and seaports, Venice, Lyons, Nürnberg, Antwerp, whence their wares were diffused in quires and bales to the famous University centres where the binders waited to cherish the books according to the buyers' pride or fancy. Great princes with echoing names,

doges, popes, cardinals, bankers, incited these artists. Mathias Corvinus, that remarkable King of Hungary, had an artist from Naples to enclose his copies with azure and crimson enamels, and to feather the interstices with gold. Moors and Jews wrought finely in Cordova—Saracen books bore gilt knotwork and pearls of red paste. Greek binders in Venice with simple definite tools made elaborate devices on the supple red and blue leather. The covers of some exquisite Venetian Petrarchs were punctuated with gold till the surface was like hammered metal, and blazoned with delicate gesso. But on the more reticent Florentine books were stamped golden roundels and impressions of antique intaglios that seemed to claim, in the haughty Renaissance way, a rarity and primacy of beauty.

IX

It is true that Italian literature seemed submerged awhile in this devotion of the land to the resurrection of the classic tongues; but it was only the pedants, who were used rightly and wisely enough as valuable instruments, that continued to despise the vulgar tongue. During this period of voluptuous saturation in the charm of language, national speech quickened with new impulses. French and Italian and English felt in themselves sweet strange possibilities of expression, and went on their most delicate and daring adventures—the rose-golden, precious, caressing refinement of Ronsard's love-poetry; the arrogant beautiful wars of Shakespeare's armed imagery; while Dante's divine Italian became so esteemed that it sang through the courts of Ferrara and Milan. Niccoli might despise Dante's monkish Latin; but others like

Landino, Filelfo, Michelangelo, Leonardo, did him sufficient homage. Latin was the world-language, demanding a greater type of intercourse, and a more highly convoluted brain than Esperanto. It was the church-language too, incense-laden, pontifical, "the murmur of holy Latin immemorial," rumorous of adoration and appeal. Greek, volatile, exquisite, divinely articulate, was the archetypal tongue of gods and philosophers. But, if Italy partly neglected her own vernacular language awhile to do the necessary drudgery in recovering the classic tongues for Europe, Guicciardini, Machiavelli, Ariosto, Castiglione, Berni, Lorenzo de' Medici, Poliziano, Tasso, continued the beauty of the vulgar tongue.

Still, every good is dearly bought. Renaissance learning set the fatal division between the cultured and the uncultured. Knowledge was now so complicated and diverse that leisure was necessary to penetrate it at all. It filtered no more, except in hidden and simple places, as myth and oral tradition to the poor, while the invention of printing broke the mighty tradition of imaged story, and took from sculpture those themes of great and beautiful legend which are so much more kindred to its nature than the baroque of allegory.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Petrarch begins solitary study in Vaucluse	1337
Boccaccio introduces Leontius Pilatus as a Greek teacher	1362
Giovanni di Conversino da Ravenna at Padua	1392-1405
Life of Guarino da Verona	1370-1460
Discovery of Cicero's Familiar Letters	1389
Council of the Churches (Council of the East and West)	1438-1439
Manuel Chrysoloras teaches Greek at Florence	1397-1400

The Scholar

	A.D.
Poggio Bracciolini searches for MSS. in Switzerland and Germany	1414
Filelfo	1398-1481
Niccolò de' Niccoli	1363-1437
Gemistos Pletho persuades Cosimo to found the Platonic Academy	1438
Valla's Pamphlet on the *Donation of Constantine*	1440
Beginning of San Marco Library	1441
Vittorino da Feltre's School at Mantua	1425-1446
Election of Nicolas V	1447
Life of Marsilio Ficino	1433-1499
Fall of Constantinople	1453
Life of Poliziano (Politian)	1454-1494
Neapolitan Academy formed	1458
John Argyropoulos in Greek Chair at Florence	1456-1471
Roman Academy founded	*c.* 1460
Bull of Pius II to protect Antique Remains	1462
Pico della Mirandola lives	1463-1494
Cardinal Bessarion leaves his MSS. to Venice	1468
Palatina Librarian at the Vatican	1475
Aldo Manuzio at Venice	1490-1515
Aldo's Neacadamia founded	1500
Annals of Tacitus found	1508
Erasmus visits Rome	1509
Pontificate of Leo X	1513-1521
Predominance of Bembo	1513-1521
Aldine edition of Plato	1513
John Lascaris died	1535
Sack of Rome	1527
Vespasiano da Bisticci	1421-1498
Protest of Raphael as Inspector-General of Antiquities.	1518

CHAPTER V

The Artist

I

Not really in philosophy was the triple flame of sense, soul, and intellect which formed the Renaissance spirit to find its ultimate expression. That imaginative rapture, that unbounded emotional curiosity, could achieve its reconciliations, by no processes of abstract reasoning, but only in the myth and symbol of art. There the synthesis of desires and aspirations was completed, and all the anomalies divinely resolved. Greek and Roman and Christian dreams, mediæval and modern passion, beauty of sense and soul, beauty of yearning and fulfilment, beauty of man, woman, boy, god and angel, flow into great harmonies in the architecture of Brunelleschi and Bramante, Michelozzo and Alberti, in the sculpture of Donatello, Verrocchio, Agostino di Duccio, Michelangelo, in the painting of Leonardo and Botticelli, in the medals of Pisanello and Matteo di Pasti, in the hundred exquisite minor arts which covered all holy or pleasurable places with an arabesque of delight.

In this concert of perfection Florence gave the dominant chord. The city of dome and campanile not only brought her own spire of lilies to absolute flowering, but sent that subtle fragrance through the towns of Italy. The passion for perfection, for a mingling of intellectual and emotional elements, for a severe outline confining

the flame-like creation of imaginative passion, makes the word Florentine almost synonymous with Renaissance Italian. Yet also from Pisa, by its extraordinary ivory group of sacred building, from tiger-like Siena, lovely and fierce, from grave, sweet Verona, builded of red and white marble, from learned arcaded Bologna, from austere Padua, from courtly Ferrara, from sumptuous Milan, from Imperial Rome, from gorgeous and insolent Venice, arose the diverse and singular strains of a new beauty of art.

This limited sketch can merely remark on the psychological bearing of some aspects of Renaissance art. Better than recorded history, better than philosophy, do painting and sculpture reveal the nature of the people of the Renaissance. It would be unwise to judge modern Germany by its music, or modern England by its poetry, for that music and that poetry are matters not inseparably part of the national life. But in Renaissance Italy what was given was so evidently what was demanded, art was so much more definitely racial expression than in any other country at any other time, that it seems fair to conclude that certain qualities of mercy, exaltation, tenderness, and imaginative sympathy, existed in the temper of the period, with all its cruelty, sensuality, and insolence. With Teutonic peoples art is an affair of the individual, and by that perhaps so much the more intense and varied; but with the Latins it is a matter concerning the spirit of race. So, especially at the time of the Renaissance, Italian art answered sweetly to an imperious requirement. The palaces, cathedrals, villas, arcades, hospitals and libraries, with their chiselled and painted beauty, were the food that served and satisfied the admirable greed of the great

lords and city councils of the time. Renaissance Italy had her appetite for the works of Luca della Robbia and his kind, as well as for the accomplished treasons of Cesare Borgia and his peers.

II

But this delicate betrayal of the temper of the time is incidental, of the secondary intention. The great fact of the Renaissance art is that it seems no more a mere vehicle, a "handmaid of religion," or of morality, but a power in itself. It may still accept the temple service, but completes it ambiguously, with a veiled smile and a proud gesture, like Apollo in the house of Admetus, knowing that it is itself divine, and that the strange chime of unison with which the human soul precipitates its love and longing into the sense of rhythm and pattern, and sees its travail and triumph transfigured by some magic of craft, is one of the ultimate goods of existence and an argument for immortality. Beauty becomes an end in itself, the æsthetic sense a fiery new element in human vitality.

So the arts differentiate, disengage themselves from architecture and from each other, stand alone, demanding their own values, insisting on the peculiar quality of the pleasure they each can give, though always with some sense of community in the final imaginative moment of surprise and delight. Still, by a natural enough paradox, having become self-conscious, they tend to a daring interplay, and sculpture is like painting in the Paradisal gates of Ghiberti, painting like poetry in the rhythmic mourn-

ful beauty of Giorgione, who is, nevertheless, completely a painter. It is a synthetic as well as a self-conscious age.

Yet, while art grew conscious that it was an end in itself, it remained organically, unalterably, implicated with human affairs. This was its glory, to be as necessary as love or food. It was neither a mere vehicle of teaching nor a mere "escape" from life, the two extreme notions of mistaken moderns. It was an extension and an apotheosis of living: the expression which intensified and enriched that living. It was the High Mass of existence. The beautiful dead lay more lovely in marble and bronze, and their fate was more woundingly sweet because of that. The secret angels of the pictures were the dreams, prides, desires that passionate people knew. The gorgeous cups they drank from, the medals that arrogantly declared their love or fame, the brilliant platters they ate from, their armour damascened with wonderful devices, their thrones, their doors, their chimney-places, coverlets, cassoni, the temples and pavilions they builded, all lent their zest of beauty to the burning business of dramatic lives. Art was the jewelled tree, that recurrent symbol wistfully indicating the human desire to make imperishable the perfection of a moment. They had drama enough in reality, but, when they rested a little, more drama, processionals and masquerades, must exalt and continue the breathless romance. It is only the devitalised that try to make the hopeless division between life and art, only the fiery and fortunate lovers of adventure who know how to enjoy the miracle whose essence is the stuff of love and hate.

I speak, of course, as a steadfast believer in the great traditions of art—those which move in equal triumph

through all enduring work, whether it bear our arbitrary labels of "classic" or of "romantic," as one to whom immortality is a characteristic of real achievement, and a characteristic of which all true artists are proudly conscious. I speak also as one to whom no art can exist in the void, each having its own peculiar substance which affects and tests the artist and the quality of his medium. The Renaissance, being in one way a climax rather than a beginning, is burdened with the odium of the long decline thereafter, which, although varied and disturbed by schools and individual masters of invaluable quality, in their way, leaves on the whole a prevailing impression of slavish copyists of mighty innovators. But the beauty and excitement of that climax remain dynamic to those who possess the historic sense, even when they grope disconsolate on the final slopes of the long descent, beholding wearily the spurious hysterical motions with which some relieve the watch for that Renewal, which outwardly may be so different from, yet essentially must so resemble, the old.

III

The conscious tradition of visible beauty was rediscovered with humanism. The Middle Ages had their own heartshaking beauty, as of love and terror and adoration violently seizing on art as an imploring language—an accidental beauty, still, for some souls, more piercing than the other. But the sarcophagi and broken statues of antiquity smote through the arts a dimly awakening sense of their own sweetness and power. These Early Renaissance folk, however, knew very well how to adore with-

out imitation. Donatello was at Rome with Brunelleschi in 1403, and an enthusiast: yet no work of his swerves from his own hybrid but original inspiration. Ghiberti writes with delight concerning certain relics, buried perhaps by "some gentle soul" during the Christian rage of iconoclasm; but no Greek or Roman would have imagined the Baptistery gates his way. Botticelli hears of Aphrodite; she rises anew from the pale sad seas of his individual dream. Michelangelo's Eros is carved out of his own soul. The Greek sought after abstract beauty of form, the pure archetypal pattern. But the Renaissance man had learned the passion for expression, and could not do without the precious differences which, though they may violate some canon of rhythm, yet hold a troubling secret of more penetrative charm. Things had to be not only beautiful to Renaissance minds, but "*strangely* beautiful."

IV

Form now firmly asserts equality with theme, or rather, theme is no longer mere theme, but imaginative substance, to be shaped into curious exciting things by new facility of craft. Painting, for example, discovers, as is fitting, the synthetising medium of oil, a fluent melting technique appropriate enough to bring together the figures of gods and saints in that exultant vision of paintable humanity.

During the Middle Ages the pressure of the psychical side on matter was so instant and invariable that tangible things merely seemed to writhe and flame under the patient passion of the soul. Now matter takes an illuminat-

ing revenge, and declares its own implicit qualities, imposing itself intimately on the intelligence.

"To break the marble spell
Is all the hand that serves the brain may do,"

says Michelangelo, speaking of the mysterious substance of the earth he loved. It was a beautiful rebellion against a beautiful authority, in which the conquest was not absolute, nor hag-ridden with theory. August imagination, august technique, clung together till they overtoppled into the inevitable exhaustion of conventionality.

The mere traditional themes of painting and sculpture continue—only mysteriously altered. They serve very well. The passion of the soul and body of man will always yield the best stuff for the painter and the sculptor; and the mythos of Christ, shaped into symbolic rhythm by the genius of the Evangelists, is inclusive of nearly all the silvery annunciations, the sumptuous epiphanies, the desolations and temptations, the vigils, betrayals, tortures, doubts, ecstasies, dooms, and sequent sweet quietudes in the garden, that go to make up human life. Supported and completed by the Hellenic myths, it sufficed indeed, for these brought the whole pageant of bodily beauty, strangeness, delight, energy, dreamy satiety. When the two cycles mingled, it pleased the subtle Renaissance mind still more. Sebastian might be himself, or Eros, or Hyacinth, or Antinous; Saint John might be Dionysos, if you had a mind to see him so. Leda, swan-like mother of deathless beauty, alternated with the Galilean maiden in the minds of Michelangelo and Leonardo. The motive of the Angel was inexhaustible in its significance. Bearing torches or roses, garlands, shields,

or fruit, the Angel, like the antique "genius" of love or death or sleep, brooded over the intimate things of the soul. For the central fact was evident, that myth is true at all times and everywhere, so that Simonetta dei Vespucci might have all the longing and unquiet beauty of Venus, or Spring, or a mere Genoese woman in her face, and be painted as any of these.

What did it matter, Christian or Pagan theme? The humanity around was revealed as eminently fit for art, sweet and violent in life, with the bizarre seduction of its types of head, with close-pressed hair, ready for wreaths or crowns, alluring and savage profiles, lithe limbs, and lovely sensitive hands, like those of Verrocchio's lady, flowers in her flowering fingers. The outer world also lay apparent, fair meadows, low cadences of blue hills, rivers, gardens, strange rocks by the sea, cities and temples, trees, and quivering skies, though hardly, during Renaissance full-tide, does landscape in itself demand much recognition; these patrons of the arts were not detached enough. Finally, the theme fades in a vague music of emotion—some figures, strange light, and a mood of the soul—in Giorgione.

V

Whether art is really essential to an age may be decided by the distinctive and impulsive character of its architecture, to whatever canons it conforms. Men build with a will, and in some emphatic manner, so long as life is "accepted of song," is not emptied of high emotion and the sense of beauty. For architecture remains the supreme and coördinating art, most expressive of time and

race and place, since it cannot exist at all, except on paper, by purely individual effort. And it is the most metaphysical of the arts, revealing somehow the prevailing dream of the Universe, the imitation of Heaven and Hell, including and supporting the agitated, suppliant, exulting or grovelling motions of our humanity.

So the Renaissance wrought out the spiritual unrest it inherited from mediævalism, with the intellectual humanistic pride of its varied achievement, in the campanile and the dome. The campanile was a heritage; the dome, recovered in a rapture, became peculiarly its own, the serenely reconciling dome above the altar, "word over all, beautiful as the sky"—dome of Brunelleschi, dome of Michelangelo, gathering all discords of diverse faith into harmony. It was the Renaissance Alberti, one observes, who first pondered closely the analogy between music and architecture.

For the Renaissance citizen, no more than for the mediæval burgher, was architecture a mean matter of fitting a building to a begrudged site and sum. It was the art of the city, the whole city as the scene for the drama of living, where the purple was laid for the passions to tread upon. Therefore, to this day, Florence, Venice, Rome, Milan, Siena, Ferrara, Urbino, Pisa, Verona, soiled and wounded as they may be, are names that conjure sudden pictures even for the eye that has never gazed on their reality.

Naturally, this very sense of architecture as a setting for human life in its pageantry, rather than as an inevitable outgrowth of elemental necessities, altered its character, slightly perverted, perhaps, its true nature. Its temples, palaces, loggie, light galleries, were arranged as

for an exciting play. The squares were set with grandiose façades, fair backgrounds for battle or masque, not always coherent with the edifice behind, while the frescoes and stuccoes within readily chimed with the life without. The sense of structure does indeed weaken toward the end of the period. The building comes to be just a series of opportunities for applied decoration, lovely in itself, not so essential to the truth of the matter as Gothic ornament. The discovery of the manuscript of Vitruvius in 1452 was really somewhat of a misfortune, since humanism became chilled into a doctrinaire influence for architecture more than for any of the other arts, and the cold decorum, the superstitious anxiety for the rectitudes of column, pilaster, and entablatures, and the fixed arrangement of the orders, sagged into another kind of reaction in the Baroque. Nevertheless Renaissance Italy had her great builders and her superb achievements in architectural beauty. What a sense of excitement even Vitruvius could give, is easily understood from Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia,* in which the monkish dreamer loses himself in a delirium of palaces, pyramids, fountains, statues, altars, pillars, amphitheatres, baths, and tombs, while column, pilaster, and tablature are lavished for mere love of their shapes through all this insatiate reverie of material magnificence. And here might be mentioned Leonardo's vast plans for palaces, temples, and cities, in which Vitruvian principles are so captured and altered by a strange Orientalism of temper, as to suggest sometimes the pillars and stairs of Persepolis.

Italy had never been truly Gothic in her temper, though her rich uncertain aspirations in the Northern style at Siena, Orvieto, Lucca, Bologna, Florence, Milan,

Perugia, have added greatly to the beauty of the world. Roman, Byzantine, Saracen, Lombard, German influences struggled within her. Her human positive temper wanted round arches, colonnades, rectangular spaces, the horizontal lines of mundane ideals, and spiritual parallelisms with earthly desires. Still, she achieved great things of different kinds in the holy treasure-house of Milan, which was, after all, the arbitrary achievement of a travelled despot; in Venice, where the Moorish fancy interplayed with Gothic points and arches; in the façade of Orvieto, the Palazzo Pubblico and the Cathedral of Siena, the House of the Doges in Venice, the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence, before the Renaissance triumphed in Brunelleschi's dome, thrown superbly over the Cathedral of Arnolfo del Cambio. Brunelleschi carried out the Florentine taste for living lines, happy proportions, calm spaces, with appropriate and reticent use of the new ornament of acanthus and vine, garland and sphinx. His varying moods are seen in the tranquil front of the Hospital of the Innocents, the gracious lyricism of the Pazzi chapel, the long serene nave of San Spirito, the frowning lower tiers of the Pitti palace. The Latin tradition had its way in Leo Battista Alberti, the theorist of *De Re Ædificaturia*, who raised the Church of St. Andrew at Mantua and the basilica at Rimini, obsessed by the old triumphal arch standing in the town, and whose smiling façade of Santa Maria Novella is a fortunate example of antique reminiscence touched with Florentine romance; in Michelozzi, who built the Medicean palace and the Convent of San Marco; in Bramante, pictorial and romantic in Milan, serene and temperate and mighty in Rome; in the San Gallo brothers; in Michelangelo, ruling out his building

as a setting for his great statuary, and raising the supreme dome of the world. Original in their dark insolence, obscurely reminiscent of Etruscan influence, rose fortresslike palaces of rough-wrought stone, of well-conceived mass and well-imagined eaves, with finely decorated doors and windows, the romantic sweetness of the cortile within, all arches and medallions and fanciful fountains, atoning for the severity without. Such were the Riccardi, the Strozzi, the Pitti in Florence, with their costly *opus rusticum*, their carved upper windows, their frowning cornices, their declaratory shields. Alberti's Rucellai, with its graceful decorating pilasters, is in a less defensive mode. Milan took from Bramante some beautiful concessions to the Lombard tradition, and from Michelozzi the poetic Portinari chapel with its ring of dancing angels. The renowned Castello grew in strength and grace; and the dome of Amadeo tranquillised to some degree the restlessness of the Gothic cathedral, too fretful for the sheer élan of the Northern manner. The flowered and imaged Certosa of Pavia early revealed the Renaissance appetite for the reconciliation of contraries.

Later, the makers of great pleasure-houses, like Giulio Romano, who built the Palazzo del Te at Mantua, a laughing Pagan place, and Peruzzi, who made the lovely Villa Farnesina, with its audacious wings and arched loggie, frescoed with the stories of Galatea and Psyche by Raphael and his pupils, relieve the stiffening Palladian manner. Meanwhile, let the mind rest on subtle achievements of the hybrid kind, on the enchanting fusion of emotions in the architecture of Venice, a city where Gothic, Moorish, and Byzantine elements always struggled against the Palladian rule; and where the rose-

golden buildings merely seemed dreamily to unfold a fresh petal or two, in a new interior court, a new gallery; the aforesaid Certosa of Pavia, cherished toy of Visconti and Sforza, its façade encrusted with all the Renaissance meinie of angels, saints, genii, and loves, and completed with tender, variable cloisters and arcades; the white limestone palace of Urbino, beautiful with tarsia and exquisitely modelled stucco work; the Temple of Rimini, incomplete but stately, with its Pagan arches superimposed on the shell of a Franciscan church in unveiled honour of a mortal love, made wonderful within by a carnival of music-making and rose-giving angels, pillared with cherubim, soothed with delicate reliefs of æsthetic and intellectual influences; the entrance courts of Genoa, with glimpses of hanging gardens; the serene Tempietto of Matteo Civitali at Lucca, and that grandiose conception of Saint Peter's, carried in the minds of Alberti, San Gallo, Bramante, Palladio, Raphael, Michelangelo, which helped to precipitate the Reformation.

VI

Sculpture was of all the arts first stricken by the joy of humanism; the unsealed eyes of the Renaissance saw once more the rediscovered monuments of antiquity, and related them to reality. The human body awoke from its beautiful catalepsy in stone, and put off the cilice and conventual shroud. From relics of antique forms, so fair that their charm could be apprehended not merely by sight but by the intimate adoration of touch, as Ghiberti says, the carvers knew again not only how reticent and exquisite are the lines of the naked body of the youth,

how softly, pathetically is moulded the form of woman, but what grace and lovely trouble might be told by blown raiment or thin fluted tunic. After Niccolò Pisano, strangely moved by the gestures of Phædra and Hippolytus on the antique sarcophagus, struck the new note in the pulpit of the Pisan Baptistery in 1260, there followed a multitude of sculptors, who appear themselves as if thronging a kind of cantoria for the lyric praise of the human body. Sometimes it seems that Early Renaissance Sculpture is the most beautiful achievement in the world, its lovely austerity just kindling into emotion, as the spring trees stand purfled with tender patterns of diverse buds against the sky. The Florentines lead, but "all are divine." It is not easy to speak briefly of the undertones of the low relief, the faint flowering of the marble, the muted violin music that seems to pass into sculpture, nor of the mournful perfection of sepulchral statues like those of Ilaria del Carotto, Medea Colleone, Gaston de Foix, the Cardinal of Portugal, Beatrice d'Este, Guidarello Guidarelli. It is possible to mention only a few great names.

Lorenzo Ghiberti is notable always as the maker of the great bronze doors in the Baptistery of Florence, covered with reliefs of untiring subtlety and facility, yet disputing the domain of painting almost overmuch, as Giotto had already inclined to do on the famous Campanile. Donatello's Gothic fury and Pagan naturalism unite in a dominating art of the most insistent kind, including Gattamelata pensive on his tremendous steed, the agonising reliefs of the martyred Christ, the ambiguous Virgin of Padua, the fiercely realistic Baptist and Magdalen, the controlled youth of Saint George, the revel of the Can-

toria, the high-bred beauty as of a Roman Vestal apparent in the Annunciation of Santa Croce, the contemplative bronze adolescent David, the complicated group of Judith and Holofernes, the wild little satyr-angels of the Paduan doors. His is a vibrating art that excited his contemporaries and excites us still: he brought the tension of the nerves into sculpture. Then one remembers the pure and serious music of Luca della Robbia's Cantoria, the "songs of innocence" of his tondos, and the grave Madonnas in his grove of hyacinths. And all those Tuscan melodists in stone whose names are such as Matteo Civitali, Mino da Fiesole, Desiderio da Settignano, Benedetto da Majano, Antonio Rossellino. It is vitalising to remember that room in Urbino Palace where the white Cupids with gilded wings and hair danced on a blue ground, and children held pots of roses and gillyflowers; the seductive ethereal touch of Antonio Amadeo, the strong and tender imagination of Jacopo della Quercia, Verrocchio's enchanting, slightly wanton David; and, peculiarly, Agostino di Duccio, the sculptor of the bas-reliefs in Rimini, where Alberti and Sigismondo allowed full opportunity to his exquisite libertinism of fancy, and of the carvings on the façade of San Bernardino at Perugia. Those women in fluted and billowing raiment, such half-Asiatic, half-Hellenic images as that of the romantic Mercury in Rimini, show a conscious delight in the elusive, the precious, the subtle element in art which commends Agostino intimately to those unfashionable souls who cannot disparage a beauty because it is of a rare kind. He is a kinsman of Botticelli in marble, more sensuous, more sophisticated.

Of the climax of Renaissance sculpture in Michelangelo

I shall speak again. To its decline, differently expressed in the audacious enjoyable mannerism of Cellini, and the inflation of imitators like Bandinelli, this sentence must here suffice. Meanwhile in Venice, Sansovino, boon-fellow of Titian and Aretino, worked out a bravura craft which harmonised gorgeously enough with the overblown magnificence of the great Republic's decadence.

VII

Painting, nevertheless, remains the typical Renaissance art, partly because, being borne vehemently and suddenly from a more primitive mode to a greater perfection of craft, its devotees could seize opportunities for doing unprecedented things, partly because it ministered most luxuriously to the pride of the eye, but especially because the emotional ecstasy of colour so incarnadined the Renaissance temper. Mere seeing became a passion. The colour that was of the warp and woof of existence, the body that cast the overweening soul from its throne to arrogate to itself the tyranny, as an idol demanding strange sacrifices, the cunning that could portray the fury of movement, slowly absorbed the whole conscience of the painter, till the great imaginative vision in which the Renaissance masterpieces were conceived, perished away in Vasari's complacent misunderstanding of Michelangelo, and Cellini's firm conviction that "To draw a naked man or woman excellently is the end of art." Tempera gives way to oil, that rich sufficing medium in which contraries are either blurred or reconciled; and the beauty of rhythmic line and of decorative pattern yields before the beauty of golden atmosphere, of prisoned light

and shadow, of brilliant impressions of motion and composition by mass.

To those who are imbued with the spirit of the Early Renaissance, the names of the earlier painters will always be more welcome than those of its arrogant maturity, like the great Venetians'. The imaginative tradition begun by Cimabue, Giotto, with his Greek nobility of attitude and sense of movement, Orcagna, the Master of the Pisan Campo Santo, and the painters of the Spanish Chapel, was supported and rarefied by the gilded exquisite art of the Sienese, dynamic with all the poignant mysticism of its climax, expressed by great artists like the Lorenzetti, Duccio, Simone Martini, Matteo di Giovanni. So did a beautiful conclusion help to nourish a beautiful beginning. The penetrative sweetness of the Primitives is a little dulled in the work of men like the vigorous Masaccio, and the strong realist Andrea del Castagno; but not only was the hieratic convention exhausted for a time, it could no longer reflect the spirit of the age. The innovators who released the figures of humanity to walk through recognisable streets in breathable air, achieved new liberations by their fearless craft. Antonio Pollaiulo, intent on the play of muscle, was a superb draughtsman and engraver: he touched Greek myth with a harsh delight, an awkward tenderness as of adolescence; and the taste for his astringent quality, his versatile strength, once acquired is not likely to be cloyed. The New Spirit is radiant in the smiling impossible battlepieces of Paolo Uccello, mad lover of Perspective. Gentile da Fabriano, a master who influenced many artists in many cities, is best known by the Adoration, which includes a magian prince of supreme and pensive charm, like a Western Gautauma,

Photo by Hanfstaengl

THE SCHOOL OF PAN

By Luca Signorelli

(Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin)

and which incidentally reveals, in the predella, an illuminated landscape, dreamlike, dewy, and fragrant with drenched flowers. Fra Angelico was mediæval in his religious ecstasy, and his deliberate refusal of the more mundane realism. Still, his qualities of linear design and aerial perspective bind him to his period; and the Renaissance gaiety inspires his roundels of dancing angels, and upflowers like wild roses in the innumerable golden heads of his Paradiso. Also, he has seen his boy pages in broidered coats laughing under blue Florentine skies. The varied genius of Signorelli is terrible and fantastic: his Orvieto frescoes bring him close to Michelangelo, and in the mysterious *School of Pan* he divined the Early Renaissance mood at its best, pagan yet dreamlike, saturated with the sense of the arrested moment which is a seed of eternity, possessed by the spells of the crescent moon and the echo of the wood-god's music.

Benozzo Gozzoli paints the pomp and pleasure of the Prince of this World, though the significant and solemn figure of the Greek Emperor seems to ride in quest of a holier and more compassionate Lord. Lippo Lippi, that vagrant monk who so loved humanity that even the pope gave him leave to marry, makes the Madonna legend a flowery idyll, a garden of happy mortal folk, their colours consonant in the clear spring weather. His son Filippino has a rarer, more exotic chord of emotion, and an intimate flowerlike grace of drawing. Domenico Ghirlandajo covers all the walls he can find with his happy comprehensive frescoes, Verrocchio, master of many arts, found tones to ring like silver bells through his blue-green evenings. To Piero della Francesca, master of solemn sweet moods and crystalline illuminations, all in-

telligent painters turned attentive eyes with a respect which time has more than approved. His high-bred people with great manners exist gravely in a world of blues and greys and lavenders, in a freedom of cool and silvery air; his close-crowned angels sing in a stainless morning of Nativity that seems ethereally evoked by music rather than paint. Perugino is the creator of devotional quietudes, soaring arches of Umbrian space where the fragile branches mourn against the lyric light of the sky, and the Madonna and her kind seem lost in a swoon of sweet adoration that becomes in repetition a little stupid. But the pale blue skies and feathery trees remain, even when the bored hand of the painter forgets to rekindle the rapture of his saints. Pinturicchio relates the brilliant Renaissance life of Pius II like a fairy tale in paint.

But now we are in full cinquecento days, days of Andrea Mantegna, the noble lord of a world that sometimes looks like a dead moon, sometimes like a solemn orchard where the ponderous fruitage is garlanded round soldier-saints and angels of incomparable might and benignity, Sodoma, a master of fine and fiery sensualism, Raphael, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Correggio, that Ovid of Renaissance painting, all sensuous bloom, ecstatic sweetness, interplay of softly sifted light, seductive gods and angels, animal yet innocent like his fauns. See there the lovely morbid smiling of Luini, and there the gracious soullessness of Del Sarto. There are also curious painters apart, like Carlo Crivelli, in whom the Byzantine tradition reflowers, unspeakably sumptuous, building great golden arcaded houses and canopied thrones, adorned with fruits and birds, to shrine a hieratic yet half-wanton people with nervous delicate gestures of rarefied hands. Then, last of

all, Venice, that unsurpassed creation of material beauty, herself almost too absolute a picture in her great replies to sea and sunset, a mythos of rose and green and pearl, breeds the painters of the final triumph of the senses. Carpaccio's spirit of imagination moves delicately through the charming pageant of his presentation of the Saint Ursula story, and his little angels sing as sweetly as may be. Gian Bellini presents gravely dreaming figures in a deep-glowing world. Giorgione, elusive enchanting personage, is the most essential of them all, creating rare moods of the soul from light and landscape and dwelling eyes, and unheard music—marvellous *poesie*. But the name of Venice most readily suggests the great Latin paganism and deep rich colour of Titian, the impulsive whirling genius of Tintoretto, the worldly festival of Veronese, that great decorator, and his school. "C'est la plus triomphante cité que j'aie jamais veu," said Commines; and the last great artists of the Renaissance painted her Assumption.

VIII

Supporting and surrounding these great arts of the eye was an infinity of little arts, so that it is difficult to imagine how intricately the setting of life was filled with beautiful work of the hand and the imagination, where now the interstices are stopped with ugly mechanical devices. The churches had their altars, their pulpits, their cantoria, their ciboria, tabernacles, tombs, doors, fonts, balustrades, lamps, candelabra, holy vessels and sacramental garments, all calling for ingenious craftsmen and great artists. The palaces had hangings, carpets, plate, torch-rests, fireplaces, tarsia-work, reliefs, terra-cotta,

mosaic, their enamels and their majolica. Even pieces of the pavement of the Cortile of Isabella d'Este in the Castello Vecchio are now kept in museums as precious relics. The people had their jewels and embroidered sleeves, the men their swords and helms, the women their golden garlands. Besides the guilds of specialised workers, the artists were ready enough to do anything that participated in the beauty of life, from a statue to a toy, like Cellini; and Leonardo would turn aside from considering his mythic Cavallo to link a curious spiral pattern for a woman's sleeve.

Benvenuto Cellini's treatises on the eight branches of "the glorious art of goldsmithing," unfolding the art of *niello*, filigree work and enamelling, gossiping on how to set a ruby, also about medals, and cardinals' seals, are unsated with wild relish and relief of anecdote concerning papal morses and kingly salt-cellars.

The most remarkable minor Art of the Renaissance is perhaps that of the medallist, of Pisanello, Francia, Sperandio, and Matteo dei Pasti, the Medallist of the Eagle, Fiorentino, Grazzalotti, San Gallo, Cellini. Those rondures convey the intense pleasure of things done with anxiety, triumph, delight. They share the pride of the soul that commanded them to be perdurable, to be a bribe for immortality, not alms for oblivion; and they convey the fashion of life in that century, a fashion so flame-like that it would lay hold on time to come as well as devour time past.

IX

In considering the essential art of this period, we find that the spirit of the Rennaissance dwells deepest in the

work of Botticelli, Mantegna, Michelangelo, Leonardo. For Botticelli is saturated with the sweet and sorrowful emotion of his period, the indefinable regrets, the desideria that haunt great passion; Mantegna represents its worship of the antique world; Michelangelo is its troubled conscience; Leonardo is its perfected soul. As for Raphael, he remains a great artist; but there is nothing in him peculiar to himself. He was, in the strict sense of the word, the vulgariser of more original and sometimes more difficult types of genius.

The continuous suavity of Perugino, the fantastical romance of Pinturicchio, the masterful values of Leonardo, the mighty movement of Michelangelo, all these elements meet in Raphael, that facile synthetiser of other men's techniques, other men's imaginations, just disedged enough, unriddled enough to make them easily acceptable. Of course he has a marvellous ease and mastery of rhythmic line in the presentment of his comfortable melting human Madonnas—so good, and not too wise—and his repetitions of the imaginative effects of others are often infinitely charming. Still, it remains true that Raphael's orginality lies in his achievements as a decorator, especially in the vivacious strips of arabesque in the loggie of the Vatican, a form of activity very congenial to his happy and versatile nature, and in the superb sincerity of his portrait-painting.

Sandro Botticelli, the only painter mentioned by Leonardo in his treatise on painting, the prentice of a goldsmith, the friend of the Medici, the listener of Savonarola, had in his troubled heart that love of some spiritual quest for impossible beauty which keeps the more visionary type of artist for ever enchanted. It is not sig-

nificant that Botticelli is a master of roses, pale, mournful, exquisitely shaped roses. The violet, the iris, the wild orchid, the wood spurge, all the sensitive plants he knew, but his shy pure roses the best. It is the Secret Rose of the mystics whose flames quiver in lovely disquietude behind all these wistful curious faces. He is Florentine besides, pondering, perplexed; his is the agonising paradox of "the naked, *thinking* heart." Moreover, in this age of masculine temper, when the women please most as diplomatists and warriors, Botticelli remains the artist of the feminine principle, concerned chiefly with maintaining the acute spiritual trouble which prevents stagnation, with a complicated reverie of love and pain that only image can tell—the excess of sweetness, the crucifixions of love, the conflict between desire and renunciation, that longing for some unimagined and undeclared beauty which made him paint the neutral angels for Palmieri, so that they were called heretics for a while. These things, startling, disturbing, he resolves into unison by the wavering rhythm of his pattern. Woman, preoccupied with the dying god, as Venus or as Mary, Beauty, the mystic mother of Love, set about with ancient symbols of bread and wine and pomegranate, he draws within some tondo, and surrounds her with rings of strange angels, bearing flowers or twisted tapers. Or he sends her, dangerous liberator, pensively through the rare morning as Judith. Or bids her stand proudly to receive the secrets of her lovely ministrants in the Villa Lemmi frescoes. Or sees her protest, stript and lone and lovely, the naked Truth of things, against the cruel follies of the world. Or lets her float over the rippled seas, a faery woman with sensitive soft motions, sorrowful at all the

woe to come, showered about with her wan roses, sister of that tender Lodovici Venus, so unlike any other in antiquity. Or, in her thin raiment and golden bredes, leaves her to brood ironically, opposite the sleeping Mars, on the satiety and frustration of all earthly experience, divining that

> "Even in the very temple of Delight
> Veiled Melancholy hath her sovran shrine."

Or, in his masterpiece of imaginative design, she comes through the enchanted grove of Spring, that seems so filled with flame-like figures, not only as central goddess, but more as the feverish flowery creature with startled eyes and hastening foot—Persephone awake with the yearning narcotic April, back with death in her heart. It is his supreme expression, that masque of flowing forms which, like some sweet cadences in verse, half concede and half evade the formal canon.

His city admired him for his masculine force; and masculine perhaps is the certitude and perfection of his rhythmic pattern. Nor is the nervous vibration of his art inconsistent with an age of masculine energy.

Andrea Mantegna is the archæologist, knotted hard with the artist. Roman shapes, Roman symbols, possess him like an idolatry. He drives his conception of classic authority to an almost cruel perfection by his haughty hard draughtsmanship: its pride is so passionate that it seems ice-cold. Yet what great fruits and flowers this stony world could put forth are visible in the splendid saints of the Madonna of the Victory, and the frieze of Cæsar's Triumph, and the drawing of the frozen Judith, and the Parnassus of Isabella d'Este's rooms. He is both severe

and supple, moulding his beautiful warriors in a sculptor's attitudes, amazing as a painter by the audacities of his perspective. His temper has the stoic nobility of a Marcus Aurelius, yet sometimes betrays the dreadful emotion of the strong, emotion repressed to grimacing point, and sometimes the gracious gaiety of the Dance of the Muses.

Michelangelo's one interest is the soul of man, with the body exalted or tormented by that soul. He was supremely an intellectual among artists, and a mystic, the reader of Dante and of Savonarola. More than all others of his time he was conscious of disaster and a prophet thereof; the knowledge that times of wrack and change were at hand bowed him with a tremendous melancholy, mightier than the peculiar Renaissance melancholy, which is ever the shadow of pleasure. He is never Christian in any of his conceptions, though the Hebraic fury of Isaiah and Ezekial possesses him often. Neither was he Hellenic, though Platonism seeded through his soul. It is not only the doom of Italy that concerns him, but the doom of humanity. His bound and agonising creatures in the Sistine and elsewhere accuse the God to whose power they witness. Intolerable destiny, and the dim striving against it, as through a drugged sleep, are the themes of the great mythic figures in San Lorenzo Sacristy. Yet he saw beauty, and the sweetness of the love of which Plato wrote, and uttered it in his shapes of youth, austere, meditative, haughty adolescents, in certain Madonnas, like august fair aliens and exiles, fallen patricians, themselves the mighty deposed from their seat, rather than the exalted of low degree, and in those poignant sonnets, half for Vittoria Colonna, half for Tommaso Cavalieri. He

made the fierce young David; he wasted his heart on "the tragedy of the tomb," which was to have immortalised Julius II. Against his will he painted the Sistine with an apocalypse of foreboding and revealing shapes. He cast the dome over Saint Peter. He fortified Florence, then raised the Medicean tombs, exalting the puppets who were set over her in her defeat into symbols of daemonic force. The Platonic myth of the charioteer with the flaming and the unruly steed seems peculiarly harmonious with the soul of Michelangelo, him who wrought the sleeping Bacchus, the merciless Eros, the Giovannino like a slim heathen child, and brought the drowsy reverie of Antinous into the beautiful head of the Bound Captive, who told the history of the human soul in terms of the triumphal or tortured body, but whose soul was athirst for God, a destroying inexorable Power, not of the Gospels, nor of the Hellenes, yet with some mystery of love in his cruelty.

But there was quiet in Leonardo, the quiet of the motion of the "great waters" he loved. The mysterious fatality that has dogged his work, destroying it piece by piece, has left him imperishable in the enigmatic power of his personality; and that, as the lord of Renaissance things, is what he would have most desired. To know all things, to do all things, to contemplate life like a god with much irony and some tenderness, a smiling suffering god, who has acknowledged all the discords and contraries, yet can modulate them into harmonies—this was Leonardo's power. The delicate love-child, grew to a youth of extraordinary beauty, with senses of rarefied acuteness, delighting in all kinds of refinement, fiery steeds, flowers, ornaments, curled hair, music; and went from Lorenzo to

Lodovico as a luteplayer, using a fantastic silver instrument of his own invention. As we track him in the fascinating drawings and comments of his notebooks, he guessed at the causes of most things—the history of the sea and the moon and the body of man. He saw Nature and saw her whole. He saw not only the birds fly over the brambles, and the iris grow beautiful around Florence, and the young leaf turn itself to capture the light and dew and tenderly mother the fruit, and the unspeakably soft grace of the violet and colombine: he was aware of cyclones and earthquakes, the clashing of icebergs and the horror of great inundations and the sinister preparation of the skies for mighty tempests: he knew her as a nursery of death for all the rich sophistry of her evening skies and dewy mornings. Nevertheless he devised pageants for Lodovico, played for him, painted the pictures of his loves. He invented engines of war, and went to battle in the train of Cesare Borgia. He considered again and again the problem of flight. He planned buildings, schemed drainage systems, thought of how to pierce mountains, and scoop great harbours. Like a god or a king of old he loved to lead the waters through thirsty lands, even as he would fain measure the winds and ride the air. Meanwhile he perfected his art of painting, so that it presented serenely the rare kind of beauty he desired, long sought in his drawings through all the mysteries of pose and gesture, in labyrinthine hair, and pointed hands, and the petals of flowers, the eddying of waters and the changes of the clouds, and achieving that smiling ambiguity of expression which reconciles diverse matters, and which never ceases to irritate the fanatics of simplicity. He annoyed the citizens of Florence, pleased the French in

Milan, made a friend of the gentle æsthete Giuliano de' Medici, and amused cardinals in Rome. He passed to the service of King Francis, and died in the strange land. We have of him only the amber shadow of his Adoration, the ghost of the great *Cenacolo*, the pictures of the Virgin with Saint Anne, the famous, much-altered Gioconda, the not less significant Saint John Baptist, the Virgin of the Rocks, innumerable divinely lovely drawings, some notion of the rearing *Cavallo*, a tender tradition of "school" painting, and a sense of what human personality may become. The drawings in their infinite variety convey some impression of that questing and subtle spirit, for the surety of the line left by Leonardo's silverpoint or pencil is unique in its quality. He drew—mathematical forms like conjurations, machines all eyes and teeth and claws, ready to leap alive, the swifts dropping towards the eaves of Florence, great bat-shaped wings for mortal flight, human organs like sections of complicated blossoms, heads of girls and boys, of warriors, apostles, and terrible grotesques. Among the fragments of his steady and sinistral script, disciples unsandal near the sections of dangerous machines, faint virgin faces appear in the shadow of Assyrian wings, young men smile disdainfully at exquisitely articulated skeletons, horses fit for gods rear close to diabolical scythed chariots. Here a baby's head shows the soft ring-curls of infancy; there Salai shakes his long and lovely locks. Tormented faces cry out from the Battle of the Standard. Pensive figures have strayed from the Last Supper. Young masquers pass suddenly with long lances. Dancing women in faery raiment float out of the page. There are fragments of the

dream of Leda, fragments of the dream on Saint Anne. Again and again recur Leonardo's own devices, the signatures of his soul, the bird, the flower, the sword, the dome, the face of the ephebus, the entrelac, the dragon, the twisted hair, the eddying water. And you may see all things dissolve into the dark infinite wave that breaks in a surf of unimaginable corollas, and know that in this phantom image dwells all his philosophy.

Whatever he draws, the effect of magical disquiet is Leonardo's enduring gift—a stir and expectation in the mind, a pulse and apprehension in the blood. A bird, a charger, a boy's head, drawn in that fine and fiery line instantly invades some tuned intelligences like a young moon in a green sunset, or the first look of first love with its promise of impossible felicity. Leonardo still imposes the authority of his beauty, the sanction of his charm; so that any meditative mind when seeking the archetypal name of an artist instinctively finds the musical syllables of the Florentine's.

For the end of the greatest Renaissance artist, like that of those he wrought for, was personality. He who was completer in his vision than any artist, he who could use light to define his images, who saw the azure shadows of white things, the subtints of penumbra, smoke, sunbeams, rain, and the bright edges of dark-hearted trees in morning, he who was inattentive to no least novelty of craft, held that the matter of painting should be man and his thought. Art was but another gesture, after all. It was not, as in our times of insane division, a kind of dreadful delicate chimera devouring the rarer and stronger part of character for its needs, leaving the rest crazed, or

hardened, or indifferent, or wilful. Michelangelo might write:

> "For I was born from Art, from childhood given
> A prey for burning beauty to devour."

But he and Leonardo and the rest were men of affairs, deeply concerned with the problems of life and death, ready to build, or carve, or fortify, or engineer, or write verse, or comment on Dante. They were like those for whom they wrought, a strange powerful people for whom art was one of the great conditions of life, who neither loitered over beauty like dilettanti, nor reviled it as a sort of emasculate pleasure, who ate and drank it as daily bread and wine, mixing it continually with their violent loves and hates, recognising it, all of them, as an independent power indeed, but also as either a subtle earnest enemy or ally.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Pisano's Pulpit at Pisa	1260
Certosa at Pavia begins	1396
Paolo Uccello	1397-1475
Ghiberti	1435-1488
Palazzo Riccardi by Michelozzo	1430
Brunelleschi begins the Dome at Florence	1419
Alberti at Rimini	1447-1455
Fra Angelico	1387-1455
Donatello	1386-1466
Della Robbia	1400-*c.* 1482
Masaccio	1401-1428
Fra Lippo Lippi	*c.* 1412-1469
Verrocchio	1435-1488
Palazzo Strozzi	1489
Piero della Francesca	1415-1492

	A.D.
Mantegna	1431-1506
Botticelli	1444-1510
Giorgione	1477-1510
Bramante at Saint Peter's	1506-1514
Villa Farnesina by Peruzzi	1506
Giovanni Bellini	1428-1516
Leonardo da Vinci	1452-1519
Perugino	1446-1524
Raphael	1483-1520
Amadeo	1447-1522
Correggio	1494-1534
Andrea del Sarto	1486-1554
Giulio Romano	1492-1546
Michelangelo Buonarotti	1475-1564
Michelangelo at Saint Peter's	1546-1564
Benvenuto Cellini	1500-1572
Da Vignola	1507-1573
Palladio	1508-1580
Titian	1477-1576
Saint Peter's	1506-1626

CHAPTER VI

The Courtier

I

Courts and courtiers had during this period an importance bewildering to us, for whom no actual court presents any relations whatever with art or scholarship, for whom, indeed, no "court," in the Renaissance sense of an assembly of brilliant personages around some one distinctly brilliant personage, set in a magnificent scene, really exists at all.

But the Renaissance believed that the many-petalled flower of personality, which it especially desired to cultivate, demanded rich soil of leisure and splendid intercourse. And, since the Italian Prince himself was a prince usually by some distinction of personality, he builded his palaces and arranged his gardens pictorially that the human comedy of significant people might be played as perfectly as possible around him. Besides, international politics was still a spectacular interplay of individualities, so that the Renaissance gentleman-scholar, eager for opportunities to express his nature, found them readily only in the service of a prince. And again, the chivalric ideal lingered in the notion of some romantic strain of personal devotion. The lives of Bayard, Sidney, Castiglione, perhaps the three most famous Renaissance gentlemen, are inseparable from the idea of a court—a court which might break the heart with its caprices, which consumed

the soul with the flashing feverish life it gave, yet was not altogether unworthy the service of proud souls, since it never feared to welcome the terrible anarchism of beauty, destroyer of all mortified matters.

Il Cortegiano is the manual of Renaissance ethic. In that series of colloquies the nature and conduct of the perfect gentleman are brought into words, as Edmund Spenser thereafter intended to do in English verse. It is a noble book, expressing a "Pagan" but lofty ideal; and the writer was a noble figure, whose life was in harmony with the conception he made conscious.

II

Baldassare Castiglione, the author of the *Cortegiano*, was made of Mantua, Milan, Urbino, and Rome. He was born of noble parents, his mother a Gonzaga, in 1478, in Mantuan territory; so entered early into the life of the court. Elisabetta Gonzaga, sister of the prince, married the Duke of Urbino in 1486; later she was to be the centre of the society immortalised in the famous book. Baldassare was educated after the ideal of Vittorino da Feltre, whose tradition was strong in the duchy of his great pupil Federigo. He became an accomplished rider and lord of horses, hunting and hawking gaily, yet absorbing classics and literary lore with infinite pleasure. Mantua was increasing in its pomp under the will of Isabella d'Este, that lover of magnificence wedded by Duke Francesco; but a greater and a novel centre was considered necessary to continue the boy's education, so he was sent to the royal Milan of Lodovico Sforza. There he learnt Greek from Chalcondylas, Latin from Merula,

geometry and mathematics from Fra Luca Pacioli, the eccentric friend of Leonardo. Music he practised steadily; and learnt to understand architecture, painting, and sculpture from the eminent artists gathered in the city. Meanwhile his fastidious eye and ear must have been fully flattered by the life of masque and festival which delighted the imperious youth of Beatrice d'Este, the young duchess. The overthrow of Milan restored him to the service of Mantua; but during a visit to Rome he became acquainted with Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino; and, when that prince returned to the domain whence he had been driven by Cesare Borgia, he asked the Gonzaga to permit Castiglione to enter his service. The request was granted, though disdainfully.

Perhaps Castiglione was intended to watch the Papal interest in Urbino, since Guidobaldo had recognised as his heir Julius' nephew, Francesco della Rovere: more probably he was simply attracted by the amiable personality of the Duke. At all events, his years at Urbino formed the golden period of his life, during which, the friend of the gentle ailing Duke and the idolator of the Duchess, one of a company of charming and witty people, he developed in his mind the matter of the conversations in *The Courtier.* Twice he went as ambassador, once to England, when Henry VII. conferred the Order of the Garter on his lord, once to Milan, to confer with Louis XII. After Guidobaldo had quietly departed from his life with the verse of Virgil on his dying lips, and the stormy Francesco Maria della Rovere reigned in his stead, Castiglione's life became enmeshed in wars and embassies. At one time he is fighting with his duke against the French, at another pleading for him with his golden

mouth against the fury of Julius after he has struck down the detestable minion, Cardinal Alinari. As ambassador at Rome in the Court of Leo X he resumed the humanistic gracious life of his heart's desire. This is the era of his friendship with the kindred Raphael, and of the dreamy leisure during which the *Cortegiano* was evolved. But Leo's predatory design upon Urbino could not be withstayed after the death of his restraining brother, Il Magnifico Giuliano, who had been the duchy's guest in his exile, and loved it too well to plunder it. The Pope seized it for his nephew Lorenzo, and Castiglione went to share the temporary exile of his patron in Mantua. During this time of quietude, while in the service of Duke Federigo of that city, he wedded Ippolita Torelli, who died after three years of wedlock, young, beautiful, and beloved. More embassies troubled the days of the upright and unfailing courtier, endlessly entangled in the intrigues of Mantua, Milan, Urbino, and Rome. In 1523 he escorted Isabella d'Este to Padua and Mantua. Back in Rome as ambassador to Clement VII, he had the evil fortune to be sent as Papal Nuncio to the Emperor. Castiglione was as candid as he was proud: the supreme distinction of his personality was the sincerity that lay like a diamond in the golden craft of his courtiership. Between the shiftless vacillating Pope and the shifty remorseless Emperor he felt himself undone and distraught. To all he did and said the actions of the Pope immediately gave the lie, and the Emperor countered with equal falsehood, always the more deceiving because he really valued the man he played with. The Sack of Rome and the misery of undeserved reproaches preyed on his wearied body; he sank and died at Toledo in 1529, greatly lamented in many

lands. "I tell you that one of the finest gentlemen in the world is dead," said the Emperor, let us hope remorsefully. A year before, the *Cortegiano* had been published at Venice, for Vittoria Colonna, that great lady to whom the manuscript had been lent in confidence, had permitted so many to take copies that the author had to publish in defence of his own work.

Raphael has painted him, tranquil, urbane, richly dressed, with grave eyes—the Perfect Courtier whose days were passed in war, diplomacy and culture, who served faithfully and proudly, little rewarded except by universal praise. Castiglione had a genius for friendship. The prefatory letter to *The Courtier*, in which he laments the fair folk of his youth, is a deep fountain of emotion.

III

Think a little of the courts where Castiglione's courtier was to move. In some, doubtless, he would have been out of tune—in those where the less Hellenic strain of Renaissance paganism prevailed—in Perugia, for example, where the Baglioni coloured their households like frescoes, where Grifonetto and Zenobia moved in gold and pearl among leaders of lions, racers, court-fools, musicians, and pages in brocaded coats. In the Court of Cesare Borgia, it is true, camp as it was usually, people like Machiavelli and Leonardo were at home among the improvisatori and lutanists. Still, there was hardly sufficient leisure to watch the "streaks of the tulip," the variations of personality. Milan, even in its great days, was perhaps overmuch delivered to the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Florence had its beautiful amenities, both where

Lorenzo walked with his friends in the gardens of San Marco, and where the young men lay after sunset talking on the marble steps of the Duomo; but hardly in Florence, with its love of equalities, whose courts for long were disguised as burgher households, could the Perfect Courtier be well at ease. The court which Caterina Cornaro, beautiful plaything of Venice, kept at Asolo, was an idyllic interlude: the Court of Leo X was a vivacious piece of drama. Yet the typical courts and courtiers of the fifteenth century flowered rather at Mantua, Ferrara, and Urbino. In these was accomplished the life of leisure revealed by the charming introductions to Bandello's stories, by Castiglione's own work, and other dialogue writing. In the great halls of the Castello, in cool summer palaces frescoed with delight, in adorned loggie, in grottos hewn from the rock, in fruited groves, and gardens with great carven yew hedges, vine-clad pergolas, roses and jasmine, with green lawns sloping to the river, fanciful fountains making merry in their midst, the delicate people, wanton and gracious like lilies of an Elysian field, meditative smiling spectators of the mortal comedy—ladies that drop fine clove gillyflowers from their balconies, great lords that are literally the masquers of love—sit telling stories, making music, inventing pastimes, weaving out a deliberate kind of conversation concerning the ultimate things of life, talking of the immortality of the soul, of the nature of God, of the Perfect Courtier, and ever, with inexhaustible pleasure, of Platonic love. Then pass to hold high festival, and consider some comedy of Plautus, interwoven with dances and ballets of ivy-wreathed youth.

Renaissance Mantua, the Gonzaga city by green waters,

Photo by Alinari

BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE

By Raphael

(Louvre)

seems to belong to Isabella d'Este, of whom more must be said presently. Ferrara is in some ways the most fascinating court of all, where the Triumph of Love and the Triumph of Death interwind always among the singing and the flowers. Ferrara, with the Castello Vecchio of the four red towers, its quiet ways between fragrant gardens, its delizie or pleasure-houses, like Belriguardo, Belfiore, and the Schifanoia, is wrought into beauty by the sumptuous house of Este. The court of Ferrara, of which the Unicorn was a chosen symbol, was sophisticated, ironic, and dangerous. A penetrating drawing by Vittorio Pisano exhibits some of its figures in their fantastic and slender elegance, like marionettes that might utter startling things.

Perhaps it is most alluring during the reign of Lionello, son of that curiously mixed Niccolò who was the husband and executioner of Parisina—Lionello, pupil of the humanist Guarino. He walks in the gardens in the time of the ripe figs, a copy of Sallust in his hand, his studied dress made mystical by harmonies with the days and the planets; or passes to his library, fragrant with white and purple flowers; or listens to the choir of French singers in his chapel. For this humane and refined tyrant, whose strangely shaped head is so recognisable in picture and medal, is "music's enthusiast." Pisanello is of his company, Giovanni Aurispa, Guarino, Theodore Gaza, Alberti. The rule of Borso is more spectacular in its kind. Borso, Duke of the Empire, a lord of laughter and liberality, rides ever in gold and jewels through the pageant of Ferrarese life, "bringing the May" through the city, his handsome cavaliers around him, and spring-sweet ladies, their sleeves gold-broidered with French mottoes

of love. He is kind to scholars, but is no scholar, so the vernacular begins to be glad of it; and, since he loves French romances, the mediæval "matter of France" and "of Britain" is continued in Ferrara till it blossoms again in a school of Italian poetry. There are leopard-keepers and falconers galore in his train, for Borso is much of a child.

The Guarino tradition controls to some degree the hereditary violence of the Este family. Ercole d'Este, the father of famous sons and daughters, continues this life of masquerade and gorgeous patronage of art, adding to it a queer semi-mystical passion for collecting saints, like Suora Lucia. The Ferrara over which Lucrezia Borgia rules as Duchess, and as the idol of the Platonic Bembo, can still present wonderful scenic effects, varying from a miracle play to the *Suppositi* of Lodovico Ariosto, a real Italian comedy, set in the very town. But the grave point-device rigidity of Ferrarese elegance breaks suddenly into deadly attitudes. It goes black at times with the recurrent tragedies of the house, as in the dreadful interplay among the brothers Giulio, Cardinal Ippolito, Ferrando, and Alfonso himself; or on the grim morning when Ercole Strozzi the poet is found slain in the street, and none dare name the slayer.

Life is less burning and breathless in the little hill city of Urbino, where in "the hard and sharp situation," above the fruit-laden country, the great Federigo di Montefeltro, the "perfect man," built "a city in form of a palace," with twin towers fronting the west of romance and reverie, with a pillared court, and a triumphal stair, hung the chambers with silk, and made an unique library, where priceless books were clasped in gold and silver,

though ready to be divulged to the fit student. It was a House of Viols, filled with rarely-shaped musical instruments of five to seven strings. Images of bronze and marble, paintings, vessels of silver, tarsia and exquisite stucco work made more lovely the smiling rooms, their vast corridors, the oratories, the pleasant baths, the gilded doors and windows of this "very mansion-place of Myrthe and Joye," as Castiglione calls it. Under the reign of the ailing, pensive Guidobaldo and his calm sweet Duchess, Elisabetta Gonzaga, the palace acquired a peculiar renown for the happiness of its society, the perfect goodwill and liking that made wit both swift and kind. Castiglione knew the quality of *intimité*, peculiar to this group: there are friendly silences between these friendly passages of wit in his discussions. *Il Cortegiano* distils the ideals of the court in a book, translated into English by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561.

The time of the supposed conversations is March, 1507; the scene is the Palace of Urbino. Duke Guidobaldo goes to bed after supper because of his malady; the rest of the company gather round the Duchess in a circle, alternating lord and lady till there are no more ladies. These people include, besides Madonna Elisabetta, her inseparable friend, Emilia Pia, the widow of the Duke's half-brother, a lively ringleader of intellectual revels; Margherita Gonzaga and Constanza Gonzaga, young relatives of the Duchess; Francesco Maria della Rovere (Il Prefettino, as they call him, the heir to the Duchy); Federigo Fregoso, later a Cardinal; Ottaviano Fregoso, afterwards, to his hurt, Doge of Genoa; Giuliano de' Medici, later Duke of Nemours, brother of Leo X; Pietro Bembo, the famous scholar, the flamen of the Platonical

religion (author of *Gli Asolani*, a volume of dialogues on love dedicated to Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Ferrara) and the handsome humanist Bibbiena, both Cardinals thereafter; Gasparo Pallavicino, a rebellious Mercutio-like youth, who leavens the dialogues with his protests; Lodovico Pio; Lodovico Count of Canossa; Cesare Gonzaga; Cristoforo Romano, musician, sculptor and medallist; Fra Serafino, jester and actor; and Bernardo Accolti, otherwise known as Unico Aretino, a noted improvisatore and a devotee of the Duchess.

On the first night Emilia demands of each a subject of discourse. After rejecting many devices more or less playful she chooses Federigo Fregoso's theme, the "Perfect Courtier." Lodovico of Canossa, as an experienced and accomplished courtier, is ordered to begin the game of talk. He postulates nobility of birth for his Courtier, not as an essential, he admits, when pressed by the unconventional Gasparo, but as a valuable advantage and predisposition for the processes of his education. He must have valour and skill in feats of arms, yet be no bravo, nor mere instrument of war: his lithe and masculine beauty must be perfected by all graceful exercises of the body, especially by horsemanship, wrestling, fencing, riding at the ring, tilting, hunting, swimming, leaping and casting the stone. This grace, however, which is to clothe him like fit raiment, must above all be spoilt with no affectation; that all devoirs must be accomplished with an air of spontaneity, a kind of sweet "recklessness," is a point much elaborated. (Yet the affectations of Renaissance youth, standing dreamily at gaze in some fresco of the *Adoration of the Magi* or *Espousals of the Virgin*, intent on its own fair business, in audacious attitudes and

rare extravagant garments, are seducing enough to make one glad that æsthetic excesses sprang often enough from their proper soil.)

Giuliano de' Medici, lover of Music, praises this seeming negligence in terms of the art. Then the Courtier's speech is discussed from point to point—the nature of his Tuscan, the relations between written and spoken language, his manner and gesture, his clear sweet voice. As a lord of language he must love letters, more especially the humanities. Also, he must be a skilled musician; and at this point Lodovico and Giuliano exalt the delights of music against the wilful Gasparo, who thinks it effeminate. But the Courtier must understand something of carving and painting; so here Cristoforo Romano is swept into the comparison of the two arts. Then the Prefetto enters suddenly in a flame of torches from escorting the Pope on his way, so after some light talk the discourse is deferred till next night; and the younger ladies dance hand in hand, first a bazza, then a French dance.

On the second evening the company discuss the discretion of the Courtier, his sense of the appropriate and apposite. A proud humility must serve him like an instinct in deciding the time, manner, and place of exercising his virtues and accomplishments. Dancing, masking, the opening of tilting shows, are all permitted to him, with this reservation. He may sing "prick-song" to the lute, or with a quartette of *viole da arco*, but only "in familiar and loving company." From a digression on the merits of the ages of man, and what is seemly in the old, the speakers return to their ideal, to his fidelity, pure from flattery or importunity, his enthusiasm for friendship, his orderly dignified dress, black like the Spanish by preference, ex-

cept when festival exacts brilliance. The conversation, quickened continually by the little broils over women stirred up by the provocative Gasparo, becomes gayer; and Bibbiena, as an expert, criticises the three kinds of jest that brighten the world, the humorous incident, the witty word, the practical joke. Many stories are told in illustration, some of them Boccaccian enough, many sharp with modern irony or quaint with instances of human unreason (like that of the sleeping Altoviti at the council) that awaken in us an odd sense of community. The Abbot's stolid conviction that an admirable way of disposing of a great quantity of rubbish was to dig a pit deeper and yet deeper to contain the superfluous soil; the gay jest of "Phædra" (Cardinal Inghirami) replying, when asked why no prayer mentioned Cardinals, that they were included in the petition concerning heretics and schismatics; the sharp advice of Cosmo de' Medici to a fool about to occupy a position of importance, "Dress in rose colour, and talk little" (rose colour being the fashionable hue for magnificoes), are quick with humanity. Finally, Gasparo attacks his enemy, woman, again; and the scene ends with a feigned rush of the ladies on the offender.

On the third night Giuliano de' Medici, as the appointed defender of womankind, is commanded to describe a lady of the Court to match the Courtier. He is somewhat a sentimentalist, this amiable music-loving Giuliano, afterwards so terribly throned by Michelangelo in the sacristy of San Lorenzo; but he conducts his argument skilfully, and with great expense of classical example, against the vivacious attack of Gasparo and Lodovico of

Canossa. Giuliano allows that his lady must have many of the basic virtues already assigned to the Courtier; but insists, somewhat wistfully and elaborately, as if his desire were rarely fulfilled in the hard bright women of his time, on a soft and delicate tenderness, a kind of melting sweetness in her beauty, as different as possible from the masculine type. Wisdom, magnanimity, prudence, certainly! But above all, let her words be persuasive, her wit be lively, her arts be singing, dancing, and the devising of pastimes. Cesare Gonzaga is on the same side as Giuliano, but desires the more active type really proper to his time. Gasparo declares that woman is "in all things inferior," "a defect of nature," confessing instinctively her weakness by her reiterated wishes to be a man. Giuliano, provoked away from his longing for gentle manners, asserts that she has made war, won victories, governed kingdoms, become glorious in philosophy, poetry, and rhetoric. (For there were feminists in those days.) Then the two pass into abstract and subtle argument of Form and Matter, Male and Female, whence they are recalled to the concrete by Emilia. The question of womanly courage is debated, and, incidentally, the effect of imagination on courage. Moving instances abound, as of the lady who died of joy, and eulogies of women past and present, all hotly contested by Gasparo. After much excited conversation, illuminated, it seems, as by the very looks and gestures of the speakers, Cesare finds a safe resting-place in the doctrine of inspiration, and memories of Helen of Troy and her kind. The lady's business is chiefly, after all, "to talk of love." How shall she love? How shall she resist, or yield? Giuliano finally ends the debate: "Ye are

all the sort of you too great clearkes in love." But the theme is dear to the company.

"There have been lovers who thought love should be
So much compounded of high courtesy . . .
That they would sigh and quote with learned looks
Precedents out of beautiful old books."

In Book IV the company is trying to discover the chief end of their Courtier, secretly disturbed by a sense that he is too static, "too faultily faultless, splendidly null," and must somehow receive life from the touch of a god. They dispute uncertainly some little time. Ottaviano says his end is the true service of his Prince with courage and candour. They wonder if the Perfect Courtier is born or made, and if virtue can be learnt, remaining dubious, as people still remain; they ponder the forms of government likely to bring back the Golden Age, Bembo inclining to a commonweal, Ottaviano to the rule of a perfect Prince, counselled by his Perfect Courtier, a Prince liberal, just, and splendid, a giver of joys and festivals, and a haughty builder. But Frisio checks them dryly: the Prince will be as rare, if as perfect, as their Courtier.

Besides, they have given their creature all the charm of youth; now he seems to have all the wisdom of experience. How then can he be a lover? But Pietro Bembo softly names that Love in which young and old may be equals in ecstasy; and our company of Renaissance people, suddenly recognising the burning spiritual end of their Perfect Courtier, turn, sighing as with content, to Bembo, praying him to speak of the Love which is to them as miraculous, if as little realised, as a religion, the Love

whose tradition has passed from the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, through Plotinus and the Alexandrians, to the confused commentaries of Ficino, Pico, and Benivieni.

So Bembo speaks of Love—the instinct towards immortality, the desire towards beauty, which is from God. There is no ill to be given or taken by beauty, the beauty of a fair soul in a fair body, which is of its nature sacred. The Heavenly Love, unresting, lifts the soul from height to height till it enters into the vision of Beauty absolute and eternal. True lovers sit at the feast of angels, and bear within them continually this flaming vision that purifies and consumes.

"What tunge mortall is there then, O most holy love, that can sufficientlye prayse thy woorthynesse? Thou bringest several matters into one, to the unperfect givest perfection, to the unlyke likenesse, to enimitye amitye, to the Earth frutes, to the Sea calmnesse, to the heaven lyvelie light. . . . Thou art the Father of true pleasures, of grace, peace, lowlynesse and good will, enemye to rude wildeness and sluggishnesse, to be short, the beginninge and ende of all goodnesse. And forsomuche as Thou delitest to dwell in the floure of beawtifull bodyes and beawtifull soules, I suppose that Thy abydinge place is now here amonge us, and from above otherwhyle showest Thyselfe a little to the eyes and mindes of them that be woorthye to see Thee. . . . Make us to smell those spirituall savoures that relieve the vertues of the understandinge, and to heare the heavenlye harmonie so tunable, that no discords of passion take place anye more in us. Make us dronken with the bottomelesse fountain of contemplation that alwaies doeth delite, and never giveth

fill, and that giveth a smacke of the right blisse unto who so drinketh of the renning and cleere water thereof. Pourge with the shining beames of Thy light our eyes from mysty ignoraunce, that they maye no more set by mortal beauty—and wel perceive that the thinge which at the first they thought themselves to see be not indeede, and those that they saw not to bee in effect. Accept our soules, that be offred unto Thee for a sacrifice. Burn them in the livelye flame that wasteth al grosse filthiness, that after they be cleane sundred from the body, they may be copled with an everlastinge and most sweet bonde to the Heavenly beauty. And we severed from ourselves, may be chaunged like right lovers into the beloved, and after we be drawen from the earth admitted to the feast of the aungells, where fed with immortall ambrosia and nectar, in the ende we maye dye a most happie and livelye death, as in times past died the Fathers of olde time, whose soules with most fervent zeale of beholdinge Thou diddest take from the bodye and coopleddest them with God." (Hoby's translation.)

Even in the cruder, quainter English of Hoby the "rapture" of Bembo captivates the ear. It is as if some door embroidered with smooth jewelled heads and proud profiles opened suddenly on the hush of Heaven.

There is long silence, till Gasparo irrepressibly holds that such love is only for man, like Plato and Saint Francis, whereupon Giuliano quotes Diotima and Saint Catherine of Siena. But the Duchess says—of that tomorrow. "Nay, to-night," replies another, "because it is daye already," and leads her to the window. The colour of roses is in the East, where the Morning Star hangs

low; there is a chill sweet wind, and a hushed piping of birds.

IV

It is the tone and spirit of this famous book rather than its direct statements that convey to the reader a real impression of Renaissance ethic. A Pagan ethic, reminiscent always of Aristotelian ideals, in its adoration of a certain largess of soul, a magnanimity of bearing, "the practice of magnificence!" Bandello discourses greatly on this quality, and says that the French King was much censured for keeping Lodovico of Milan in captivity, so failing in magnificence of soul.

There was a certain deliberate cult of beauty of personality, charm of soul and person; but a clear consciousness that oneself could be perfected only in others enthroned Courtesy as the mother of all the virtues, as indeed she is, if one thinks deeply enough.

For those people had the sense of beauty in conduct, though they fell from it often enough, as people fail under most criteria. It is useless to read of Renaissance Italy and judge it by the code of contemporary England, for the post-war code of England, however restive, is hardly that of a dangerous and experimental people. They had a different scale of sins. What for Dante was already almost venial, became, for an age intoxicated with its changes, merely natural. Good and evil were suspected of arbitrary values: Pope Leo and Luther in their different ways both attacked the old distinction. The one certain note in morality seemed the difference between beauty and ugliness. Races and periods, like people, commit their

most outrageous crimes in lapsing from their besetting virtue. The Renaissance did many ugly things: it is easy enough to prove that it also achieved great beauty in conduct as in other arts, certainly at least as much as any other period.

Castiglione's *Courtier*, the perfected individual, vitalising as a work of art, liberal and noble in his temper, physically brave, cultivated in letters and the arts, able to compose and sing his verses, speaking and writing with distinction, passionate in friendship, idealist in love, candid and loyal in service, was a conception that wrought out many great personalities. The shocked Ascham, like others of similar temper, might be overpowered by the "liberty to sin," which he observed in Italy during nine days. He saw what he probably looked for: Philip Sidney, gravely intent on other things, beheld other things, even in the fading Renaissance of Italy.

The passion for life ran too high, and violent death overtook the courtier freely enough if he forgot his quality of discretion, as it did the "young Duke of Ferrandine," who, pursuing love hotly after a masquerade, was slain and forgotten in a night. The "certain sweetness" which Urbino found in Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, marvellously compact of grace, did not prevent him from setting ambuscades to pierce his brother's eyes when the golden Angela Borgia said those eyes were worth more than his own whole person; and yet the splendid Cardinal, the ally of Leonardo, was evidently a being with the charm of an intricately damascened blade or a sinuous panther. The dangerous people of the Renaissance had their beauty; criminal people to-day have none. Those who were upright and charming then, like Castiglione,

appreciated the charm of their deadlier brethren. That Perfect Courtier contemplated both Cesare Borgia and the Aretine with unruffled calm. It is a psychological attitude too complex to be discussed in brief. But they all had their intellectual qualities and spiritual values; they were not the children of sloth and stagnation. Luxury and violence do not exhaust the deadly sins; nor are they the deadliest.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Lionello d'Este	1407-1451
Borso d'Este	1413-1471
Guidobaldo da Feltro	1472-1508
Il Cortegiano	1528
Baldassare Castiglione	1478-1529
Pietro Bembo	1470-1547

CHAPTER VII

Women of the Renaissance

I

What pact had the women of the time with the strange new genius of beauty, standing triumphant with vine leaves through his hair, and wings all-crimson, a kind of Praxitelean Faun masquerading as an angel? For great ladies at least life was a more dazzling matter than ever before. Out of the East came wise men to teach them the forgotten sweetness of the Greek tongue: Art was their slave, to engrave their gems with angels and satyrs, to immortalise their beauty in portraits and sculpture, to invent their revels, to complicate broideries for the sleeves of their heavy robes. They made Latin orations to superb ambassadors, studied manuscripts with the scholars, dictated subjects to great painters, ruled courtly symposia concerned with subtile and daring themes, satisfied intellect and sense, yet never lost consciousness of the great game they and their husbands played for fortresses, cities, duchies, for the love of the risk and the magnificence of the gain.

But not now, more than at any other time, do we find women artistically "creative" in the limited sense of the word. In all modes of being they rival man: when life is so various, it is enough. There is no Renaissance woman with the few who have entered the kingdom of art to stand as princes there. Palaces, cities, war, peace, confu-

sion, and dramatic personality—all these they create, but not poems nor pictures nor sculpture. The Veronica Gambaras, the Cassandra Fedeles, the Barbara Torellos, the Gaspara Stampas, especially the Vittoria Colonnas, are accomplished women who wear their verse or scholarship like the jewelled garlands great artists fashioned for their hair.

The Renaissance, crowded as it is with figures of the most cultivated women in history, is masculine in temper through and through, just as the prevailing temper of mediævalism had been feminine in its strength and its weakness, although its ladies, heavenly or earthly, lived in the garden enclosed of convent or castle. In its return to Hellenic ideals, its delight in the recovery of its reasoning, synthetising vision of the universe, its platonic Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, its indulgent tolerating comprehension of all phases of being, the Renaissance is masculine, although the feminine principle, ambiguous, ecstatic, irrationally sweet, wells up in the work of artists like Botticelli, or Agostino, and the hermaphroditic genius of Leonardo.

The Athenian ideal of beauty was found in the adolescent, in the contemplation of the austere grace, the downbent head, the considering charm of masculine youth, in figures such as those of Ion and Critias. So the authority of Plato strengthened the natural delight in beautiful youth, though the Renaissance perhaps loved Antinous more than Charmides. Poliziano, modulating this theme, can almost echo the Greek Anthology. The boy riding among the spears in Uccello's battle-piece, his golden head uncovered, represents the centre of tenderness for the period. Youth is joy, he is hope, he is the unwounded

and undefeated, the heir-apparent to the illimitable kingdom of pain and pleasure. The beautiful severe rhythms of his body make an intellectual music, sweet with the melancholy of infinite desire. Michelangelo and Shakespeare are alike sincere in their vision, transmitted through many media, from the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. Languet's adoration of Sidney is in the same key. Friendship is once again the rival, if not the conqueror, of the love of woman. The recognised symbol of life, the presiding genius, may be the Madonna, as, in the Greek city, Pallas Athene; but the sweet, intimate tutelary genius of beauty in the soul is the angel, the ephebus.

Idealising the beauty of the adolescent, Athenians yet found the beauty of women also necessary. They specialised some to music, conversation, dancing, and the art of delectable intercourse, leaving to others what is commonly required of wives. But the Renaissance, penetrated still with the idealism of the Middle Ages, loath not to bring all charm to perfection, is more catholic in its range. The various, supple, enigmatic beauty of woman is stranded with the life of all famous Renaissance men, except perhaps Leonardo, who, while interpreting it, considered it only with the devouring cold eyes of the artist and psychologist. In the prime of the Renaissance Aspasia and her kind may be wives as well as companions.

The ideal of beauty is masculine; but if a woman can fulfil it, she shall have recognition. The woman-worship of romantic love is over; but the Renaissance passion for beauty will not let its women be thrust away to breed and be silent. The women do as the men, without much controversy. Policy may make the marriages, but the great princes must have beautiful and accomplished ladies to

rule their courts of artists, to shine like rose-diamonds in their splendid settings. Women come as equals, wise, and learned, and diademed, as the Queen of Sheba came to Prince Salomon. They come as comrades, too, rather than lovers. In their youth they resemble no more the mediæval lady, with her slim bending body, her cleaving soft garments, her sweet secret smile, but rather are like gallant boys, hunting, hawking, learning classics, as well as dancing and singing. Later, they ponder Greek philosophy, they are amateurs of all the arts, they govern states, they go clad in armour to keep fortresses.

Man delights in woman as she fulfils this expectation. With the true Renaissance pleasure in gathered contraries, if she can reconcile it with the dreamier, softer, more fragile grace, he is the more enchanted. The masquerading page-girls of Shakespeare and the rest allure with all the evasions and surprises of sex: the maiden knights of Ariosto and Tasso and Spenser, as well as the angels of Leonardo, betray this imaginative duality. When Isotta degli Atti is sculptured for her temple it is as the Archangel Michael. When Pope Alexander would exalt Lucrezia, he makes her Regent of the Vatican, Keeper of the Papal Seals and Governor of Spoleto, this passive golden Lucrezia, with a soul like white wax. And among many pious denunciations of women's fashions we find a husbandly one of "these caps which make women look like boys." In the pleasure-places of Rome and at the Court of France the ladies delight to appear in masculine dress. Brantôme does not like it; only his admired Queen Margot, he thinks, can wear it gracefully.

Probably woman never had so much to do with the government of Europe. Michelet's description of the

Trois Parques, Marguerite of Austria, Louise of Savoy, Anne of Brittany, plotting and counter-plotting for the love of their own kin, is not easily forgotten. Mary of Hungary keeps the Low Countries in bond for her brother Charles. Isabella of Aragon, that Most Catholic queen, is glorious in Spain, and buys it a new world by her comprehension of a friendless adventurer. Catherine de' Medici brings her poisoned blood and her fine hands to complicate the destinies of France. Elizabeth of England illustrates how admirable a symbol even a vain, cold, irresolute woman can become in an essentially masculine age. Mary Stuart, most complex of all, Renaissance in her imagination, her tolerance, and her beauty, mediæval in the direct and wilful way of her soul, drives more magnificently on disaster. In Italy Beatrice d'Este, that smiling, dancing child, urges Lodovico on dangerous ways towards a crown, while Isabella, her sister, plays the diplomatist for a fierce and unwise husband, and Caterina Sforza holds her own against Cesare Borgia, like the condottiere her ancestor. Diamante Jovelli leads the women of Faenza against the same conqueror; and the ladies of Siena, arrayed in three coloured companies, can go gravely to work at the defences of their town.

So they learn Latin and Greek, they speak orations, are marvellously sweet in discourse, and double their petals in the atmosphere that exhales from the astounding pomp of beauty that surrounds them. Cecilia Gonzaga, although a saint, is the most accomplished classical scholar in Vittorino's school. Dancing, music, conversation, however, are even more insistently part of their education. Perhaps never was a more ideal scheme for a girl—music for the harmony of the soul, dancing for the

rhythm of the body, conversation to link her close with human beings, literature, classical and modern, to imbue her with sympathy, tolerance, intellectual courage, the visible arts to rarefy her vision of the world.

The type was accomplished. Women were made, and described, as wonderful works of art. They are constantly regarded as such, things to be appreciated for their various qualities, with a catholic taste, intellectually on the whole, rather than sensuously. It happens one time, in 1537, when Renée of France, that bitter and unhappy princess, is Duchess of Ferrara, that Vittoria Colonna and the famous Tullia of Aragon, *hetaera* of Rome, are in the town at the same time. Correspondents debate the points of the two visitors: on the whole, Tullia, singing, playing on the lute, versing, presiding over symposia, eloquent on Platonic love, commenting on the Lenten sermons of Ochino, as much a woman of letters as Vittoria, discreet and delicate, quite forgetful of Roman ways, appears the more brilliant star. There are, of course, innumerable ladies who are given in marriage, attend to the house, and play no great part. But Isabella d'Este, keen, bright, sparkling like a diamond many-faceted, lover of all the arts, of all recorded women burning most steadily with the "hard gem-like flame" desired by the most famous commentator on the Renaissance, is the type adored.

In Italy, in France, in England, the women, artists themselves in personality, steadily drew the arts to perfection, for these throve by their favour. No emasculate art, since they had the intellects of men! It may seem strange now, to take one instance only, that Matteo Bandello told his charming non-moral stories in the Courts of Milan and Mantua and Urbino to great ladies of immaculate virtue.

But they had the crystal minds of the intellectually courageous, at once frank and super-subtle. Bianca d'Este tells the tale of Parisina without a quiver: it is an objective fact to her, though it happened to an ancestress; she is "impassible." They look at the spectacle of life, and unflinchingly recognise the grotesque and satyric as part of the procession, nay, find it stranger and more exultant because of this incomprehensible element. They have read the classics: the world and its people are their most exciting themes. So they listen with candid eyes, and assent cheerfully to the implicit assertion that whatever is may be spoken of. Sometimes, however, the Eternal Feminine breaks through. Isabella d'Este cannot permit her ladies to attend the representation of one comedy of Plautus. She goes herself, looks very displeased—but remains.

II

Still, the emotional in them could not altogether die. The very objective beauty with which they busied themselves troubled their nerves. Life must have some absolute good, to engrave every individual soul with finality. And what food for the heart in its agony and reality? Adoration flattered them; desire sprang at them now and then like a tiger; but Love of woman, that mystery and miracle of the emotions, that tyrannous impenetrable god to whom Dante had made obeisance, veiled his face from a world that no longer considered his cross in the rose-garden an end in itself. There is comradeship and friendship between husband and wife; there is pride and joy in motherhood; but the fierce energy of the business of existence imposes curious limitations even there. Besides,

the women themselves also are disciplined, schooled, ambitious; they also will not throw a bleeding heart into the arena. They will do as the men in this, even as in other matters, without unnecessary parade, however. Nothing hysteric in a lady of the real Renaissance! So they, too, placate the need, not only with elegant devotions, rosaries of black amber, portable silver altars, and fashionable Lenten preachers, and with spectacular poetic widowhoods for bridegrooms that can wound no more, like Vittoria Colonna in her sombre veils, or Veronica Gambara with her four chariot horses blacker than night, or Giulia Gonzaga, jealously preserving her temperamental virginity behind that frail impenetrable defence of amaranthus. Theirs the mystical soothing dream of Platonic love, rosily blurred and softened to succeed the old romantic and chivalric doctrine.

As Pletho, Ficino, and Pico dreamed of it, the ideal was still sufficiently like that of the *Phaedrus*. But the women become too evident to be excluded. So it loses its white intellectual light: becomes swooning, tender, languorous, that it may be confounded with the mystical love of the saints. Its later archpriest Bembo is formed by beautiful women, Caterina Cornaro, Lucrezia Borgia, Isabella d'Este, Elisabetta Gonzaga, Vittoria Colonna. He is the high priest of the Heavenly Love in *The Courtier*; yet it is understood that the lower nature must have its due, and Bembo his mistress. Even in that mild fair court devoted to ideas and amenities, Il Prefetto will suddenly slay his sister's lover; and Giuliano de' Medici, whose imagined court lady is so divinely inaccessible, has his conquered love in the very town, whose Easter baby will

be found in the street, clasped with silver, cherished by strangers, claimed again, and made into a Cardinal.

So there hovers about these great figures an ambiguous, hybrid, half-Platonic angel, with a dazzling light in his eyes, and, perhaps, fetters on his feet. How much did Giuliano, that reckless handsome Medici, love the disquieting Simonetta as the fever flushed her cheek in her last springtide? What was in the strange heart of Lucrezia when she sent Bembo that tress of her golden hair? When the young widow Giulia Gonzaga, pure and lovely as the amaranth of her device, in her court by the sea met the arrogant and mournful eyes of Giuliano's son, grown into that Ippolito who was the last of the Medici to bear himself nobly, surely she sighed and dreamed a moment of a less idolatrous regard.

Still, it was a convenient hypothesis for days when all marriage was a political arrangement, when babies were betrothed in their cradles, and the passion for beauty bowed the head before all who were lovely, that a great lord might serve a fair lady in the spirit, without reproach, even as in the days of *l'amour courtois*. The division between love and marriage was deeply set; and the obstinate loyalty of Vittoria and Elisabetta to absent or invalid husbands was considered an amazing thing. Sometimes there was heartburning. Clarice Orsini in Rome had a headache while her betrothed Lorenzo held his *giostra* in Florence under the eyes of another lady, platonically adored. And sometimes they had their revenges, these women who clothed themselves now and then in heavenly blue, to signify their devotion to the Uranian love.

For they are hard as well as fine and various. Women

never give up their essential sweetness till their hearts are broken; and in that feverish age most of them realised early that hearts had best be forgotten—never awakened at all. Behind the secret proud faces that gaze at us from the canvases of the great painters the soul is asleep, or fortified. They have the exquisite perverse beauty of the Amazon; but like these they are maimed. Passion has its way with them over and again; but much more rarely Love. Eloïsa and Francesca are of the Middle Ages: at worst a Countess of Cellant, at best a Duchess of Malfii for Renaissance lovers!

But at times the sword pierces the delicate silver mail of Platonism; and the Amazon casts up her arm over the wound in her breast, with a gesture of appeal and despair. The musing face of Simonetta da Vespucci seems to keep all the ironic, implacable disillusionment of a wronged imaginative love, wounded, yet cleaving to the sword that slays. Was it fever or some spiritual malady that consumed the luring Genoese concerning whom Lorenzo meditated so pitifully that evening when he saw a new star in the sky? Barbara Torelli the poetess, robbed of her lover, Ercole Strozzi, by one in Ferrara against whom there is no redress, writes a fierce sonnet sincere enough to consume all the other feminine sonnets the Italian Renaissance produced. Vittoria Colonna's proud silence and the obstinate idealism of her poems to her notoriously faithless husband are still more eloquent. Alessandra Scala, the beautiful scholar beloved by Poliziano, widow of a learned Greek, is glad to seek peace in a Benedictine convent, and die a nun.

There are many types. Will you consider Isotta degli Atti, her hair swept up from her clear intellectualized

face, lutanist, poet, scholar, singer of Petrarch's canzoniere, lithe and delicate, *The Honour of Italy*, holding the strangest lover's heart in her two fine hands, herself comrade even more than lover, covering her passionate wounded breast with the epicene grace of the "delightful friend"? Hers is the kind of face for a medal, not a picture, high, resolute, dauntless, with severe fine structure and faint colour, though her bust emerges vulnerable and tender like a tulip-bud from its leaves. Or Giovanna delgi Albizzi in Botticelli's fresco, receiving the Graces, like a dreamy tall lily? Or the women coming statelily to see Elizabeth in Ghirlandajo's pictures? Or the Ferrarese, slender and gallant, gazing at jousts and hearkening music? The fine profile of Isabella d'Este, with its gracious flow of hair, and her body clothed in azure, broidered with golden notes of music? Or the Duchess Beatrice, with soft irregular features, dancing to her death? Or Cecilia Gallerani, that scholarly beauty, and Lucrezia Crivelli, the darkly glancing, who divided Lodovico's emotions with her? Or Cecilia Gonzaga, Vittorino's pupil, nun and vestal, steadfastly refusing a hateful marriage, immortalised by the medallist with lovely symbolism of crescent moon and unicorn?

In Milan, in Rome, in Ferrara or Mantua, their splendour is inexpressible. They are clothed in woven gold and showered over with pearls. At the wedding of Lucrezia Borgia, the bride glowed in crimson and gold garments, Isabella in the more mysterious green and gold, Elisabetta Gonzaga in black and gold. Their brocades were all patterned with the devices they loved: their beauty rose slim and regal out of their great-sleeved robes: cunning artists devised jewels for their hair and breasts and hands.

Twined and twisted that hair, and interwoven with tissue, in subtle spiral devices such as Leonardo imagined for the head of his Leda—part of their curious twynatured psychology. "Neither anything twisted nor crossed" should they wear in Florence, according to the vain sumptuary law. But they interwove their decorations all the more.

III

Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, was a child of the gorgeous Duke Ercole of Ferrara and Leonora of Naples. Guarino's pupil, she was early a good Latinist. Listening to the verse of Boiardo, Strozzi, Bello, gazing at comedies of Plautus and Terence in the frescoed Castello, in the flowery carnival town, she grew like one of Pater's boys, fed on delicate sensations. At fifteen, the golden age for marriage according to Renaissance fancy, she went to wed Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga, lord of Mantua, went with wonderful cassoni, with gilded bucentaur. He was a rude husband for this lover of perfection, a hunter, warrior, athlete, and breeder of Barbary horses: but she seems to have been content enough. At Mantua she made herself into a kind of burning-glass for the art, literature, and philosophy of Italy—*la prima donna del mondo*, as Niccolò da Correggio called her. The passion for things, and for perfect things, consumed her. The "spirit within the sense" burned like a kind of soul. She was a diplomatist, outwitting French and Borgian wiles: she practised many little arts, sang and danced divinely, doing well all she did. But her supreme desire was to surround herself with the fine flower of tangible beauty.

An exquisite materialist, she had a kind of organic passion for the rare and precious in art and personality: indeed it is the only kind of passion that dwells behind that lucid profile. She must have perfect things, unique things, and must have them at once—that is her constant cry. Her studiolo azure and golden, her carven camerini must be caskets of delight. Since music is dear to her she must have inlaid viols, lutes of ebony and ivory, and clavichords made by that peerless master Lorenzo da Pavia; while a friend procures her a precious organ of alabaster in Rome. Fra Sabba Castiglione, the Knight of Malta, sends her calamus for her lyre, and meditates moving from Halicarnassus to Mantua the marble pomp of Artemisia. Books also are her treasure: best she loves the virgin manuscript that only the bright hunger of her eyes shall deflower, but she also accepts the Aldine volumes, specially printed on silk-smooth vellum. She is beautiful, golden and white, with dark eyes, so artists must design her brocades and jewels, Mantuan envoys find her sables and crimson satin, "for God's sake." She can quell the Prior of the Certosa of Pavia, and go where no woman went before her. In softer moods she can sing her own strambotti about drifting autumn leaves. Letters fly about, endlessly demanding rings, seals, enamels, camorras, engraved amethysts, silver and *niello* work, turquoises carven with Victories, cloths woven with leopards, doves, and eagles. Majolica, Murano glass, colour her rooms. The works of Mantegna, Costa, Giovanni Bellini, Michelangelo, Perugino, Correggio and Francia adorn her dwelling; and some of them patiently paint her difficult allegories. Giulio Romano, afterwards builder of the Palazzo del Te for her son, enlarges the

Castello for her use. Paolo Giovio, Bembo, Castiglione, Ariosto write her eulogies. Cristoforo Romano is her medallist: Leonardo carries her lutestrings, and draws her profile in passing, though her sweetest wiles shall get no more favour from one more princely than herself. Masquerades and plays compass her about; for they also are among her pleasures. Her maids of honour are beautiful and richly clad—too beautiful at times, like Delia, who enthralled Pescara. Indeed in a less obvious, more elegant way, her cluster of charming girls do sometimes suggest the cynical use of "galanterie" as practiced by Catherine de' Medici and her "flying squadron."

Life on the whole was kind to her, though she had her cloudy times, when her husband, in disgrace with Venice and Milan, was openly amusing himself with his Teodora. She was a dilettante in experiences and persons as well as in *objets d'art;* and it was her fortune to see Venice, Milan, Urbino, Florence, Naples, Rome, as well as her own Mantua and Ferrara, at their supreme moments of festival or disaster. She, the lover of novelties, was one of the first to hear of the discoveries of Columbus.

Persons she marked with the same penetrative distinction. Elisabetta Gonzaga is her dearest friend, with whom she reads romances, sings French songs, plays scartina. At Milan she appropriates the most brilliant cavalier to tilt with concerning Rinaldo and Orlando. Niccolò da Correggio, son of that lovely Estensian lady called the Queen of Feasts, poet and accomplished courtier, is her slave for long; she is disdainful when Bembo and he bow down before the new Duchess of Ferrara, Lucrezia. Lodovico of Milan and she appreciate each other, though

she lets him go quickly enough when there is danger to his state. Castiglione is another friend. Cardinal Ippolito's ambassador to her is Ariosto, whose rarity she divines instantly.

She is loyal to her family: a joyous and adoring mother to her son Federigo, though she pays little heed to his sisters, trying to make him a humanist, so that the boy goes singing Ovid through the Castello. Also she is generous to her friends in the way of hospitality, unless they prove guests too dangerous for the security of Mantua.

Yet, with all her fineness and sweet feminine malice, she seems as insensitive as the graven jewel she resembles. So much she took, so little she gave. When her friend Lodovico is fallen from his glory she writes at once to the traitor Pallavicino, begging her sister's lovely clavichord from the spoil. Worse still, when Elisabetta Gonzaga, the intimate of her breast, is driven with Guidobaldo from Urbino, she obtains from their supplanter, Cesare Borgia, the Michelangelo Cupid and an antique Venus, which priceless images she refuses, with complete amiability, to return when they go back to their palace. Even Mantegna's distresses she does not relieve without depriving him of the carven Faustina that he loved immeasurably, so that it was easy to die when the imperishably beautiful thing was gone. From the dreadful tragedy of the Sack of Rome she snatches a Cardinal's hat for a younger son. Nevertheless the universal delight in her rings sincere. She had great courtesies, swift appreciations, a serene tolerance, and knew perfectly the art of pleasure. Bandello pictures her in one of his introductions "in the citadel of La Caviena, where the sojourn useth to be not only cool but cold in summer, and there disporting

Photo by Giraudon

ISABELLA D'ESTE

By Leonardo da Vinci

(Louvre)

herself as of her wont, now reading, now debating, now hearing the sweetest of musicians sing and play and now taking other pleasant and seemly diversions," such as discourse of "matters amorous." Her swift bright letters yet spill some of the audacious delightfulness of her being, so that we realise she is of those who are loved more than the loving, because they are wonderful to contemplate in their moods and gestures, because, like works of art, they heighten the vitality of the beholders. The devices and motives she made her own are seals of her personality—the musical notes and rests, the lyre on the altar, the candelabra. Her disciplined senses burned for the arts; she loved tangible beauty as women love it who have never been stricken by the arrow of Eros, with passion, subtlety, and radiance, rejoicing in those unwithering flames like a salamander. And, partly because of that, we cannot deny her that high unfeminine quality of "magnanimity" which her contemporaries unhesitatingly allowed her. Yet she lived a little too long, so that the vulgar mocked at her fards and aged vanities.

Her sister Beatrice, the girl-bride of the fascinating and magnificent Lodovico Sforza, less intellectualised, more passionate, more kind and angry, awakes a greater tenderness somehow, perhaps because she lies so childishly at rest in that effigy in the Certosa at Pavia. If she did urge Lodovico to grasp the dukedom, it was hardly a crime, according to the political ethic of Renaissance Italy: if she flouted the rival Duchess Isabel, it was in the wilful way of youth. Beatrice was not so learned, though she could make her orations with the rest; she wanted joy and splendour. While life lasted she had her fill of masquerade and dancing. Naples was vivid in her

as well as Ferrara; she hunted, hawked, and danced, this soft Beatrice with irregular babyish face, dark and flushed like a rose, for whom Leonardo made pageantry, and built pavilions, and Romano carved, and Caradosso made chains, and the sweetest voices in Italy sang. She was more generous than her sister, giving freely with both hands; and she suffered feverishly because her duke loved others as well as herself. Still, she danced; and of dancing she died.

A softer light irradiates the figure of Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino, a creature of sweetness and reverie, patiently faithful to her ailing husband, but with much of a craving heart. She was more curious in the sympathies of the soul than in *objets d'art,* though she had a taste for letters. "But the thinge that shoulde not be rehearsed without teares is that the Dutchesse she is also dead," writes Castiglione, remembering, in the book composed from the golden evenings she made possible. Moving gently about the musical palace of Urbino, she composed a harmony of her own, a harmony of souls that found their chord of rest in her tender presence.

More austere is the music that lingers about the name of Vittoria Colonna, the Roman wife of the famous Marquis of Pescara, brilliant and treacherous warrior. Obstinate idealist, she would not admit that his blazon was sullied as a soldier, and that his love was with the Delia who served Isabella d'Este. Peace was her dream, even if it was the peace of sorrow; and his death leaves her with the illusion she records in the sonnets concerning *il mio bel sole*, in which, *splendide mendax*, she burns incense in the Petrarchan manner to an idol that all Italy knew to be of clay. Thereafter she moves from convent

to convent, living simply, seeking rest in great ideas of God and holiness, yet preserving the sweet power of giving grace for grace, as when she sends a costly perfume of roses in a casket in return for Titian's Magdalene. Reginald Pole, Ghiberti, Sadoleto, Bembo, Castiglione, Paolo Giovio, Bernardo Tasso, Molza, all were her friends; but it is her chief glory that in serene and cloistral plăces she talked with Michelangelo of art and religion and philosophy, building with him a great pure friendship, undisturbed even by the dying kiss he did not give. Condivi relates: "In particular he greatly loved the Marchioness of Pescara, of whose divine spirit he was enamoured, having been passionately loved by her in return. . . . He for his part bore her such love that I remember to have heard him say of nothing did he grieve so much as that when he went to see her, after she had passed away from this life, he did not kiss her on the forehead, or on the cheek, as he kissed her on the hand." In this belated and unique episode of Michelangelo's stormy emotional life a distinct pale-rose reflection of *l'amour courtois* falls across the spirit of one who "spoke not otherwise of Love than according to that which is to be read in the writings of Plato." Well! Tormented, ill, distracted by money troubles, overworked as he was, the sonnets of the great sculptor easily outburn those of his leisured and princely lady, so gracefully "making her soul" with the help of those elusive intimacies found soothing to a spirit like hers—with Valdès, Carnesecchi and Cardinal Pole, as well as Michelangelo.

The Lucrezia Borgia of strange legend is of another clay. As we see her now, passive and smiling, with her golden hair caught in nets of green silk and pearls,

passed from husband to husband, terribly loved by father and brother, she seems to look at all things as a child at a play, sweetly acquiescent, surrendering and uncomprehending. Whatever may be true of the policies and passions of her kin, it is clear enough that her untroubled eyes often saw love and death go by like fauns and satyrs, bearing thyrsus and poisoned wine. Yet she came obediently to reluctant Ferrara, lived virtuously when virtue was required of her, had Bembo for Platonic eulogist and Bayard for her declared knight. She spoke Spanish, Greek, Italian, French, and Latin—though not a learned lady as the times went. She danced Spanish dances to the sound of tambourines, had blue eyes, yellow hair, and an unremembering soul. Unremembering? Perhaps not, for when she died, sincerely mourned, she was buried in Corpus Christi Convent in the habit of the third order of Saint Francis. In Rome she is a beautiful unconscious creature, formed by father and brother to their use, like one of the pearls they shut their poison in, as legend has it: in Ferrara she does as the Ferrarese require of her. And her childlike charm, her "boundless will to please," stole homage away from even her chiselled sister-in-law Isabella, to that lady's sore displeasure.

It is easier to understand why Lucrezia was loved than why "that armed lady" of Forli, Caterina Sforza, was universally admired. For she was cruel as death, and sensual, like Catherine of Russia and Christina of Sweden. Nevertheless the Renaissance found in her *virtù*, and appreciated her generously, as they did her enemy Cesare, for she had beauty and courage, the supreme quality of woman, to an extraordinary degree. The

woman-at-arms, the "virago," was a favourite theme with the period during which Mantegna, Botticelli, Donatello, and others occupied themselves with the mortal beauty of Judith. The daughter of the vicious Galeazzo of Milan, wife of Girolamo Riario, the entirely detestable nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, she early realised with bitterness that she was mated with one whose crimes were not even palliated by valour. Nevertheless his fortune was hers, and when the Pope died in 1484 she held San Angelo in his favour as long as he desired it. When the people of Forli acquiesced in the murder of Girolamo by three conspirators, and she was held prisoner with her children, she recovered the position by sheer audacity, re-entering the castle, which held out for her, by trick and violence, replying to the threat of harm to her heirs with counter-threat of bombardment, and words of superb impudence. As she rode militant in her great black hat of velvet, with her curved sword by her side, Italy admired the dangerous figure from a distance, "for that armèd lady was both fierce and cruel." Milanese aid restored her power and she avenged herself terribly. When her lover, Giacomo Feo, was slain in his turn, she became a tiger-woman, quieted only by the blood of men, women, and children: there is some evidence that these red visions haunted her thereafter. She worsted Machiavelli in diplomacy, plotted with Venice and Florence. When at last the Borgia desired the Romagna, and came to take Imola and Forli, the keys of the region, she made a desperate resistance in her castle, for the town was easily won over by Cesare's benignity. Taken at last, by the united power of French and Borgian arms, she made a dark expiation of her own evil-doing in the prisons of the Borgias, chiefly in San

Angelo; but was released in the end. She retired to Florence, for her last lover and husband had been a Medici; and with true Renaissance versatility turned her militant mind to more peaceable matters, cures for the plague, studies, devotions, embroideries, and the training of her fierce Medicean son, famous afterwards as the last of the great condottieri, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, whose untimely death left Rome defenceless before the spoiler.

The real antitype to the vivid versatile Renaissance lady is found in Venice—Venice the fastness of Orientalism, where woman remains an Eastern priestess of pleasure. There the great ladies live softly immured in their palaces, appearing only at solemn festivals adorned with excessive magnificence of brocade and jewels; or else we have glimpses of them on their balconies, lazily tinting their hair and drying it in the light; for, if it is well for woman to be golden in any town of Italy, it is imperative in the city of sun and sea. Titian, Palma Vecchio, Veronese, Bordone, have caught up the aspect of the Renaissance Venetian lady, opulent, rose and white and golden. You may find a Cassandra Fedele, poet and scholar, a creature of nervous beauty, clothed in white and singing Latin to her lute. But she is a rare apparition here. In Venice, said a shocked observer, the women look like Trojan women attending on Helen, not like Christian ladies.

Venice and Rome are the capitals of the *hetaerae*, the sorrowful women whose trade is pleasure. Yet even these must not be mere creatures of sense; for classic tradition meddles with them also, requiring them to be refined and literate. They are famous for their music, their sonnets,

their philosophy, and, of all ironies, their meditations on the Platonic love. Michelangelo sets an epitaph of one between two sonnets to Vittoria Colonna. Bandello pictures Roman Imperia in her gracious golden house, laid with Eastern carpets, surrounded with lutes and citherns, books of music, and leaves of madrigals. Tullia d'Aragon, reputed child of a Cardinal, poetess and lutanist, "speaking softly" of the nature of love, is loved by nobles and poets, adored and idealised; and her house is the centre of wits and *literati,* though she dies miserably enough.

Another contrast to the typical Renaissance lady is found in the ecstatic, the mediæval visionary, still held sacred and used as a kind of fetish, as Isabella used Suor Osanna. Suor Colomba of Perugia lived on the sacrament, and prayed away a life of renunciation in her turbulent town. Lucia Brocadelli dances with the angels, communes with Saint Catherine, and receives the wounds of the Stigmata, which bleed terribly in Passion Week. Ferrara and Viterbo fight for her. Duke Ercole, triumphant, makes her abbess of a convent of nuns; but she is too young to understand government. When the Duke dies she is deposed and maltreated and humiliated; but, a miracle indeed and at last, endures the misery patiently for long years, till death astounds her persecutors, and she is a saint again.

The ideal of the various, learned, artistic Renaissance lady quickly communicated itself to France, where the tolerant, tender, half-cynical, half-sentimentalist Marguerite of Valois rivalled all Italy in some ways. Diane de Poitiers is a queen of the arts: Catherine de' Medici is the genius of intrigue. Later, Mary Stuart learnt all sweet French and Italianate matters of life and art, to

her destruction. The type is not so marked in England, despite Lady Jane Grey and some others. Elizabeth herself becomes the "Virago" ideal in perfection; but, like most queens, prefers subjection for the rest of her sex. Yet some charming intellectuals there were, like "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother."

But Elizabethan drama is thronged with figures of Italian women—more seducing and sweet, more of the *passionnée*, in the English imagination, than their brilliant reality suggests. Vittoria Corrombona was an actual lady; and the dauntless sinister beauty of her speech, as Webster dreams it, is true enough to type. The Duchess of Malfi is also in Bandello, but she is mysteriously etherealised in the death-agony of Webster's play. Ford's proud Calantha is very like a Renaissance princess, and so is his lovely desperate Annabella, in her scorn of traditional moralities. As for Shakespeare, the dream-Italy of Elizabethan England possessed him through much of his life; and he poured the mournful epithalamy and the triumphal dirge of young love over the bier of Juliet of Verona. It is to be remembered that England came late to the Italian banquet; and that her imaginative contact was chiefly with the feverish fatigue of the dying Renaissance. As the "immortal longings" of the great period vanished, the women cast away their arrogant grace, to avenge themselves on the rigid etiquette that had superseded magnificence of manner, wearying of their emptied stateliness, craving for dark forbidden ecstasies, snatching violent delights almost with an invitation to violent ends.

The undisputed unheeded victory of the true Renaissance women, the very fact that man was in a way and for

a time more indifferent to them than before, because of all the new things under the sun, communicated a strange unrest to their sex. Henceforth, as Michelet says, they are more consciously at work. *Elles troublent, corrompent, et civilisent.*

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Isotta dei Atti	1425-1470
Beatrice d'Este	1475-1497
Alessandra Scala	*Died* 1506
Caterina Sforza	1462-1509
Caterina Cornaro	1454-1510
Lucrezia Borgia	1480-1523
Elisabetta Gonzaga	1471-1526
Isabella d'Este	1474-1539
Vittoria Colonna	1490-1547
Tullia d'Aragon	1508-1565

CHAPTER VIII

Florence 1434-1494-1530

I

The Renaissance City is the flower of its region: no vicious distinction as yet parts the town from the campagna, except in times of war, when the gates are shut and the walls made strong. It is fed by great rivers, assailed by gracile trees, planted upon or among the interlocked hills, and sends its fine roots far into the smiling country in the villas and farms considered essential to a completely and nobly ordered life. In the concentrated streets, where inflammable folk are gathered so close that they momently disengage each other's angry or tender qualities, the drama of personality finds its crises; there must be leisure and fragrance, and murmur of leaves, to tranquillise the mind in the country retreat.

II

The pageant of Renaissance Italian towns is as varied and as splendid as may be. But the type-city of the Renaissance is incontestably Florence. The city of the red lily, of the vine and the olive, of the weavers of wool and silk, craftily twining the threads into the fair synthetic web, the city of the tenderest Campanile and the most daring Dome, naturally becomes the centre of that reconciliation of Hellenic and Christian tradition, of imagina-

tion and pure reason, for which the period is in travail. The "paganism" of Florence is delicate, blithe, and dewy as the morning; its emotional reverie is disciplined by an imaginative logic into patterns of proud reticence, till its art becomes indeed a great mythos of the quietude, the aspiration, and the agony of the soul. For a time the Renaissance of Florence, impassioned, intricate, temperate in the highest sense, an ally of every original inspiration, had its way with Italy, singing the hymn of a religious Platonism, severely yet sweetly deciding the conventions of art, setting the fashion in personality. But the Medicean Popes were not Florentines like Cosimo, Pater Patriæ, and Lorenzo; the blood of Roman mothers was in their veins, and in long exile they had lost the true tradition, were joyously enough subdued to the hard, animal, unchangeably Roman paganism of the papal city. The Renaissance perishes, not in the Sack of Rome, but in the subsequent fall of Florence; for Rome had strength enough left to slay Hellenism over again.

Not in vain are the patron saints of Florence that Forerunner, whose mystical and dubious promise fascinated the time, whom Leonardo painted like a Dionysos, with pointing forefinger and luring smile, and that adoring figure of the Gospels who *multum amavit*—the ascetic who reached supreme understanding and hailed the Light and the Logos by renunciation of love, and the prodigal who reached the final revelation of risen Love in the garden by agonising ways of excessive experience. The city may lie prostrate before the savage holiness of the desert incarnate in Savonarola; but presently will rise and dance daintily like his antitype, the Daughter of

Herodias, till she has the head of her prophet. Florence is love and hate subdued to beauty by "the shaping spirit of imagination." Lions are her civic symbol, and roar in her civic pits: lilies are her heraldic bearing, most spendthrift, most annunciatory, most life-giving of flowers. Heathen Florence belonged to Ares and his lover before it was the Baptist's and the Magdalene's. From the thirteenth century she was famous for her craft of dyeing an ardent red; and the Carroccio, that moving banner-car, the City personified, was glorious with the colour, as were the caparisoned oxen that drew it. Readers of Dante will always remember Beatrice, that strange creation of wisdom and passion, as moving gravely, clothed "in a most noble crimson."

The mobile Florentine temper, witty, gracious, and derisive by turns, *lo spirito bizarro fiorentino*, is iridescent with the curious irony and sweetness that make an inexhaustible art and a diverse people, to whom, nevertheless, their city's Athenian love of novelty and fear of ridicule render it dangerous as well as dear. Florence is loved by her folk like an incomprehensible adorable woman, rising to divine heights of idealism at times, at others scattering by cruel caprices the ever-forming mirage of her perfection. How rankling was the tenderness they bore her, let the great name of Dante proclaim, how ineradicable their pride in her beauty let Farinata degli Uberti, the great heretic he immortalised, give witness from the fiery circles of hell. On the other side, against the pain and rage roused by the insistence of this falcon-town in her pride of place in the clear Tuscan sky, against the cruel tyranny of this Republic, the undying

rancour of Pisa, bleeding and betrayed, appeals to all the generations. Yet she remains with Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem, among the cities that have altered profoundly the temper of Western humanity.

The clear bright air of the region, it was said, had something to do with the lucidity of the Florentine soul. At this peculiar era of history it made the love of beauty burn diamond-hard, so that nearly all other matters seemed little things. But the love of liberty was only less brilliant, so that the one love had to become the seducer of the other, before the city was dreamily involved, as in a triumph of goldsmithery, in the lightly perplexed chains of Cosimo and Lorenzo. The Medici indeed bought her with beauty and delight and the sympathy of her kin: when she awoke, she made a fierce expiation in the interlude of the alien Savonarola, who came opportunely, capturing her sense of contrast and her moment of satiety and fatigue. But Jesus Christ was never really King in Florence: Savonarola's triumph and defeat were alike signs of the barbarism that lurks in all highly civilised things, inexplicably interrupting, now and then, the continuity of their conscious existence. He served her emotional need, then became a sacrifice to her dread of ridicule, her terror of alien bondage, and her enduring distaste for a lasting asceticism.

III

Pellucid air, the shimmer of the wise fruitful olive about the town, the promise of the vineyards, the iris and rose of the gardens round, the gliding of the

Arno, the contour of the girdling hills and hollows, the forgotten ancient experience of the secret Etruscans of Fiesole, the mother-city, and their supplanters the antique Romans—all these helped to make the sweet and arrogant town, whose streets ended in perspective of meadow and upland, and echoed with the rispetti and stornelli of the peasant folk. Guelph noble and Ghibelline burgher, Teuton and Latin, united their arrogances to make the haughtiness of the *magnificentia communis Florentiae,* that so expressly willed to be built *de lapidibus perpetuo duraturis,* and bore the most scornful among the poets, Dante and Cavalcanti. By the decree of the Republic, in the year 1294, Arnolfo was charged to model a cathedral "of such splendour that human power should be unable to invent anything grander or more beautiful, in consideration that a people of noble origin ought to arrange its affairs that even in the exterior works a wise and lofty mind may be recognised." In 1388 subsidies are made that "a work so beautifully and honourably begun might be continued and completed still more beautifully." So perfect was the pride of Florence.

Before it was a city of merchants it was a city of weavers, for the coming of the Humiliati, that lay brotherhood intent on wool, began the story of its wealth. Woollen cloths they wove, then silk, adepts in all the material processes of a craft curiously akin to that of the spiritual life, capturing the Florentine volatility in the webs of meditation. Then the merchants, too wealthy, became bankers also, and the activity of the guilds and civil confraternities was debased by the presence of an

artificial financial interest inimical to the real values of existing things.

IV

The great days of Renaissance Florence arrive during the first Medicean period, from about 1434 to 1494, and continue during her renewed Republican vigour, from 1494 to 1530. These years begin with the exultant return of Cosimo from exile, victorious over Rinaldo degli Albizzi, and end with the sack of the city. They cover the brief uncertain tenure of his son Piero and the golden rule of his grandson Lorenzo—golden in art, letters, charm, and colour of life—though "the liberties of Florence" indeed lie quiet enough in the mesh of her councils (her own councils still, only the members are all Medicean). But the "liberties of Florence" always consist mainly of her liberty to experiment in various forms of domination —"tossing in bed," as Dante calls it; so the much-described craft of Lorenzo seems to the attentive reader of her history a little overstressed, residing chiefly in a natural superiority, a natural instinct to shape a city according to certain ideals of magnificence and vitality. He was a Florentine of the Florentines; and they were freer under Lorenzo than under Savonarola. Still, he had his dangers in the uncertain town, without and within, losing his handsome brother Giuliano in the violent and picturesque Pazzi conspiracy, pressed hard on ruin before the adverse alliance of Pope Sixtus and Ferdinand of Aragon, yet recovering his position by sheer audacity and skill of address, when he perilled his life in the camp of treacherous but appreciative Naples. For a time Lorenzo's Florence,

after the general confusion of peninsular war, keeps the peace of Italy. But he dies, absolved or unabsolved by Savonarola, as you choose to take Poliziano or the Dominican friar for your witness; and his son Piero, light-headed, vain, accomplished person, undoes his alliances, helps Naples against Charles VIII, and then so outrages his city by his panic-stricken submission to Savonarola's very odd new Cyrus that, on his return from the conqueror's camp, his own palace is barred against him. Charles enters Florence, but as no real conqueror, well restrained by Piero Capponi, the head of the new Republican government; and, much exhorted by Savonarola, must depart with money solace and the somewhat mocking title of "Restorer of the Liberty of Florence." Then there is great turmoil. Savonarola's constitution, already discredited by his intolerable moral inquisitions, the jangling of Bigi, Arrabiati and Piagnoni, the physical misery of the city, the Pisan troubles, the cruel execution of Lorenzo Tornabuoni, the uneasy sense of the Papal Interdict, and, above all, by the inevitable revulsion, devours its author. Florence, unwounded, evades Cesare Borgia; then, under Soderini's mild leadership, continues her way till Giuliano, Giovanni, and Lorenzo de' Medici, with Spanish help, capture her again, and restore the power, though not the spirit, of her greatest ruler. In 1519 the death of Giuliano leaves Cardinal Giulio the lord of the city. On his elevation to the Papacy as Clement VII, the elder Medicean branch is left unrepresented except by the illegitimate Cardinal Ippolito and the dubious dusky Alessandro. These two in 1527 are thrust from Florence chiefly by the vigorous action of Filippo Strozzi and his Medicean wife, Clarice of the stinging

tongue. Niccolò Capponi is gonfaloniere, and Savonarola's prophecies become fire of hope again; but all is faction and distrust, so that even Capponi is unworthily exiled. Finally, in 1529, her sale is the price for peace between the Emperor and the conquered Pope. The militia, a creation of Machiavelli's brain, defends the city, clear and resolute and splendid at last. But Malatesta Baglione, her condottiere, is a traitor; Francesco Ferrucci, her noblest soldier, is slain; and Florence is seized by Spaniards and Germans, to become a "stable for mules," in Clarice Orsini's phrase, for Alessandro must be Duke. Much more remains. The cynical Florence of Duke Alessandro and his perverse brilliant kinsman and slayer, Lorenzaccio, still belongs to the Renaissance. But under Cosimo I she becomes capital of Tuscany, and the long era of lassitude begins.

V

The scene of Florentine life during the early Renaissance was that of a city proud of its beauty and its differences from other towns. The civic life might often be unquiet and mistaken; it never lapsed into the dismal monotony, the deadly day-by-day struggle or vacant social round of modern industrial towns, which, more than any other cause, is corrupting the rich and exasperating the poor. Food for the eyes at least was Medicean or Republican Florence, and so food for the gazer's soul. Therefore life was pleasant in her streets, and exile bitter for them that remembered the Campanile and the Duomo, the Palazzo Vecchio, and *il mio bel San Giovanni*. The tradition of Etruscan, Roman, mediæval beauty was

haughtily continued by a city that understood how to build its ways for exultations like Donatello's or Luca's singers, for melancholies like the sleepers in the sacristy of San Lorenzo. Even so late as Vasari there is maintained a quiet conviction that such a matter as the Della Robbia flowering in blue and white is *molto utile por la stata.*

Florence lay irradiant in her sun-washed air, with a wonderful natural elegance of contour, determined by her river and low girdle of hills, her streets ending suddenly on silvery olives and shapely cypresses, her houses hearkening to the songs of the vine-treaders, her bridges busy with many chafferers. "A city like a garden," said Montaigne; and indeed her happy interplay with natural things gave her art something organic and irresistible, so that her sculpture seems to wake from stone as easily as early lilies from the earth.

The genius of Arnolfo and Giotto had shaped her before the actual Renaissance broke. But her spirit was never Gothic, and seemed steadily to forebode the "awakening," when that embroidery begun by Pisano and Orcagna should be so variously completed.

The Campanile, rose and golden, Giotto's tower, is the soul of Florence, the symbol of her sane aspiration, lifting the crafts, arts, and sciences, the only things that matter to the real city, high into the air of passion and rapture, into the world of imagination, with the music of bells, yet without losing gaiety and lucidity, in the Florentine way. By this shaft of beauty the Renaissance set the audacious dome of Brunelleschi as a sign and seal of reconciliations that are not compromises. High soared the octagonal dome over Santa Maria del Fiore, compassed with its three semilunes and triumphantly clasping its

great lantern. Never finished, this Duomo that Arnolfo began, yet once made glorious within by the dancing genii of Donatello's organ-loft and the young psalmists of Della Robbia's cantoria, with lavabos of eagles and gryphons, silver reliefs by Verrocchio and Pollaiuolo, papal and warrior folk sculptured at rest, work of Ghiberti and Michelino, and, later, by Michelangelo's tragical Deposition from the Cross. Without, the panelled marbles enriched the façade, and the pilastered doors carried lions and winged putti. Especially lovely the Porta della Mandorla, where Nanni di Banco's Madonna gave her girdle to Saint Thomas, a saint who much preoccupies the sceptical spirit of Florence, willing to believe in mystic Love, if her hands have felt the wounds. A great composed cathedral, where sacred and secular things might mingle, young gallants moving freely about the choir while the Mass found its indestructible and undisturbed consummation, as when Giuliano fell in the Pazzi conspiracy.

Near by, the older, oldest sanctuary of all, covering the site of the ancient Temple of Ares, hiding the fierce heathen flame that both kindled and consumed so much Florentine idealism, among the tombs amid which Cavalcanti mused, stood the octagonal Baptistery of San Giovanni, black and white, with its doors of gilded bronze by Andrea Pisano, Della Robbia, and Ghiberti, whose third gate of stories, lightly graven plane on plane, friezed with fruits, birds, and beasts, and set with delicate little statues, manifests to perfection the spirit of the New Age, with its dancing pleasure in the fusion of the arts. Well did the Florentine artists from Donatello to Verrocchio and Leonardo serve Saint John, altering him

from a wasted ascetic to a nervous young aristocrat with massed curls and half-closed eyes and a strange smile, and then to the god of mysterious solstices, and the luxury of enchanted midsummer nights. Opposite it the gracious loggia called the Bigallo continued the memory of mediæval works and ways, an outpost of the Confraternity of Misericordia.

If you went by the Way of the Beautiful Ladies you ended in the Piazza di Sta. Maria Novella, the Dominican Church, striped with black and white, joy and sorrow, a Gothic building with an Alberti façade of a romantic elegance, and Brunelleschi arcades, and the pageantry of the men and women of Florence repeated by Ghirlandajo in the choir. A storied place, where the lords and ladies of the *Decameron* had met together, where the Rucellai Chapel still kept in its legendary manner the birthday name of Cimabue, where the Green Cloisters and the Spanish Chapel maintained both the grace and the doctrine of the Middle Ages.

But the Gothic Santa Croce of the Friars Minor, simple and unadorned, with its three high doors, was the church for scholars, where Gothic and Renaissance dreams were to mingle with scientific speculation, where Donatello's patrician lady bent faintly towards the annunciation angel, and the lovely Chapel Pazzi was like a suave smooth movement in music. Bruni and Marsuppini lay here—here where a humanist might sleep well, with little genii and shells and wings and lions' feet and great falling festoons about their monuments, Our Lady of Comprehension gazing above.

In Or San Michele, again, art and the guilds kissed together, for in this rebuilt loggia of the corn-sellers, half

store-house, half sanctuary of miraculous Madonna, the corporations nobly bore their part in the Florentine *religion* of beauty. Within was the shrine of Orcagna; without, in the niches of the stone piers, were statues presented by the greater and lesser crafts, notably that group of Saint Thomas and the Christ in which Verrocchio so exquisitely conveys the Florentine note of delicate dubiety. In the Church of the Trinity Gentile da Fabriano had brought together East and West in the fresco of the Epiphany. In the Santissima Annunziata the lilies lay in heaps in the porticoes, and Andrea del Sarto in the course of time idealised his lovely faithless wife into the Madonna. San Marco, made by Michelozzi, stood in its garden, flowered over within by the faces of Paradise as Fra Angelico imagined it; the Carmine enclosed the earthlier yet idyllic vision of Fra Lippo Lippi; San Spirito, San Lorenzo, suggested the genius of Brunelleschi. In later times the sacristy of San Lorenzo covered Michelangelo's tremendous witness to his certainty of impending doom, that eternal accusation against the human agony of wrong and pain, in which the younger Medicean Lorenzo, and Giuliano, and their terrible satellites, confront with their great enigmas the haughty confidence of the Madonna and Child.

Up on the hill, lo! sweet San Miniato, meditating mediæval and Renaissance matters together, builded in the eleventh century like an ancient basilica, with three great naves, fronted with arches of incrustation, tenderly including the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal, the Hippolytus of the Renaissance, in his carven sleep of rare youth, and Michelozzi's chapel, made for the crucifix

whose Christ bowed down to the Merciful Knight. Or you might fare farther to Fiesole of the Dominicans, where Michelozzi's convent glowed softly with more of Fra Angelico's dreams.

As for the sacred secular that mingled with this secular sacred—for the heart of that you had to go to the Piazza della Signoria, where the great tower and frowning parapet had expressed the Florentine pride since 1298. Irregularly built, this House of the City, because it must not trench on the site of the razed dwelling of the hated Uberti. The court was Michelozzi's; the door was once defiant with Michelangelo's *David,* and the heraldic Marzocco. In 1503 it was the School of Art for the world, because it contained the cartoons of Michelangelo's *Bathers*, and Leonardo's *Battle of the Standard*, drawn for the "Sala del Consiglio grande." The monogram of Christ was set there by Capponi in the last desperate days. Incorporated now is the Palace of the Podestà, the Bargello, the place of justice, with its proud armorial court, where the Pazzi conspirators were suddenly and terribly hanged from the windows.

Opposite was the Loggia dei Lanzi (as it was later called), then the Loggia dei Priori, three arcades and a fountain, built for the converse and demonstration of the people of Florence, with two lions on the grand stair, with the David, and later, the Judith by Verrocchio, telling clear the fine cruel beauty of the city. As time went on, Cellini's Perseus also stood there, revealing the same dangerous fascination in all the charming insolence of his triumphant attitude.

Yet the pities were evident also, for in the Piazza della

Santissima Annunziata was the arcade of the Hospital of the Innocents, with the quiet pathos of the white babies in the blue roundels by Andrea della Robbia.

Brunelleschi, Michelozzi, and Alberti were among the builders of the palaces of Florence. The dark Etruscan note lasted on in the great *opus rusticum* of these fortress-dwellings, for the building was savagely massed undermost for resistance, though the doors and lovely floriated windows, round-arched above, were superbly spaced, the decoration lightly and defiantly resting on the lintels, *culs de lampe,* and friezes. The courts were gracious, for the Florentines loved the secret sweetness, the honey in the lily. When more colours were wanted, cloths and arras hung from the windows, red and green for joy.

The Medicean house, now known as the Palazzo Riccardi, lordly enough as it seems, was preferred as modest to the soaring dream of Brunelleschi. Yet Michelozzi's dwelling was a house for a king, with its courts and loggie, set with Donatello's medallions, and its chapel, where Gozzoli's gorgeous procession of the Magi wound through a world of hills and streams. A treasury of precious things, of graven gems, enamels, vases, and novel visions of human beauty, yet not always inhabited, for Cosimo, who turned the waste land of San Marco into a garden, and his grandson Lorenzo, both loved the country. Or you might look at the Cyclopean stones of the Palazzo Pitti, begun by the vain old noble who would eclipse the Medici, and who dragged out there in solitude his dishonoured age, abandoned by the builders, as by all else; or contemplate the house of the Strozzi, founded with Masses of the Holy Ghost, and horoscopes, and

almsgiving, notable for its frowning cornice and its lanterns—great ironwork by Grosso; and Alberti's severe yet graceful Palazzo Rucellai, wearing its pilasters and arabesques of vases of flowers, sirens, and medallions. More delicate still were the villas like that made by Michelozzi at Careggi, and that by San Gallo at Poggio a Cajano.

These palaces were nobly adorned within, with paintings and tapestries from Flanders, with majolica, Gubbio ware and enamels, with illuminated books on their pedestals, and cunning glass and coloured busts of lords and ladies, and broideries, and the great decorated beds and cassoni perpetuating the myth and mystery of marriage. Even in poor houses were vessels and furnishings frank and graceful in their shape and hue.

VI

The scene was obviously set for drama. Florence was eminently a city of festivals, ostensibly Christian, ancient enough. At Carnival, Easter, Pentecost, and the Festival of Saint John, the natural crises of the year, she rang especially with the joy of living. Lorenzo, an artist in shows, had made Carnival a passage of interfused song, music, and colour. His lyrics went leaping through the town like frolic fauns, or wandered heavy with the regret that frays all pleasure:

"Quant' è bella giovinezza
Che si fugge tuttavia!
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:
Di doman non c'è certezza."

Photo by Anderson

THE GREEK EMPEROR

From Benozzo Gozzoli's "Journey of the Magi"

(Riccardi Palace, Florence)

His plotted triumphs showed how the Roman rode victorious, or moved the planets in seven chariots with starry harmonies.

On Easter Eve the new flame, the immemorial flame of Spring, was brought by the Dove from the altar of Santa Reparata to light the car in the Piazza in honour of the Pazzi who carried the Sacred Fire from Jerusalem to Florence. At the time of Ascension, in the Carmine, Christ went up in glory to the skies. And the mystical marriage of the Abbess of San Maggiore and the Lord Bishop was fragrant with ancient ritual. On the Eve of Saint John, brooding heathenism in its heart, you might see saints and angels moving under linen canopies in the confines of the Baptistery till the darkness was pricked with the beauty of immemorial fires. And at all times there was cathedral music rare enough to delight the connoisseurs, for Squarcialupe was once the great organist, and Heinrich Isaac, the Bohemian composer, was in Lorenzo's service.

But the Mercato Vecchio, while it remained, was the heart of the people—crowded with shops, merchants, idlers, gamblers, handmaids, courtiers, beggars, wastrels, gamers. Florence, with all the wrath and adoration in her heart, was laughing Florence, supremely afraid of ridicule, with no compassion for the befooled, frankly considering stratagems and wiles as necessary to the conduct of life.

The streets were full of a restless throng insatiable of vision and speech. The sumptuary laws were again and again defeated by Florentine evasions and subtleties, till the inclination to make sumptuary laws died out altogether. The passers-by were elders in rich mantles, gal-

lants in bizarre attire, lords in violet hose and tunics of crimson, young men in green with silver falcons on breast and back, the feathers powdering over, with long delicate legs and feathered caps, youth in *juste-au-corps,* slender and proud; mysterious, conscious Florentine ladies with fine clear profiles, high brows, and hair braided, knotted, banded, jewelled—clothed in brocaded camorras with great sleeves, mottoes broidered round their necks, garlanded by Ghirlandajo; and those bands of imperious children, ready to drag the body of a conspirator from his grave and cast it in the river because the rain fell on the tender corn, or at Savonarola's bidding to rend the proscribed vanities from the reluctant. A coloured crowd! There that pleasant beast, the giraffe, sent to Lorenzo by the Soldan, and so much desired by Anne of Beaujeu, is led on its way by two Turks. Horses from Barbary and Egypt go proudly to their stables. Fair slaves like Cosimo's Circassian mingle with the free citizens of Florence. Students in their gowns of black wool add to the volatile throng. Serious boys like the Acciaiuoli pass with downcast eyes, for they belong to a company of young men sworn to strict discipline and scholarship. Niccolò Niccoli in his red robe stoops to a child who is carelessly wearing graven chalcedonies around his neck. You may see the Magnificent himself, brooding, curious, Voltairean, the "First Citizen," Florentine of the Florentines, loving the vision of life with a pensive passion, with tenderness even, the dominator of his own defects. Near him move Poliziano intoxicated with antique dreams, he who set Italy opera-singing in the *Orfeo,* and told tales of Galatea to Raphael, and touched the eyes of Botticelli; Lorenzo's tall dark brother Giuliano, with

heavy hair, who willingly left him the state for the dukedom of Florentine youth, rider, jouster, hunter, verser, talker, music-maker, picture-lover, about him the seducing pages of Gozzoli's frescoes; the slim sad lady, the stranger Simonetta Catanei; Ficino, the little deformed canon, confused between Plato and Christ; Pico in his beauty, talking with Benivieni of mystical love; Grecians, artists, builders. You may at different times behold Alberti in a grave meditation, his eyes on the rhythm of the hills; Lippo Lippi on a frolic; Alessandra Scala, that learned woman, the beauty who knew Greek and stirred the heart of Poliziano; Andrea del Sarto, obsessed by the smooth melting curves of his wife Lucrezia. Ghirlandajo considers a fresco or a woman's garland with equal cheerfulness. Landino is much concerned with poetry and eloquence: he will discover Plato in the sweet Virgilian line, or lecture passionately on a passage in Dante. Leonardo, beautiful in rose-colour garments, is disputing a point in the Divine Comedy with some in the Piazza Santa Trinita; and, courteously referring it to the rudely clad Michelangelo as he goes by, is pierced by a retort familiar to all lovers of perfection. In San Marco garden the young artists dream over antique fragments. All the great humanists come and go, arguing and rhapsodising. Up in his lovely villa, Matteo Palmieri is brooding on the transmigration of souls and considering a heresy of Origen's, for, in his Renaissance passion for immortal shapes, he desires to keep angels in company with his gods, and cannot bear that the lost seraphs should go for ever unredeemed. They will bury him soon with his heretical poem upon his breast.

It is morning, and the excited folk ride out hawking,

in eager rivalry concerning their birds. It is Carnival, and Lorenzo's triumphs and songs fulfil the city, for he has made the traditional carnival a work of art in itself, banquet, pageant, and music. Choruses, classic pictures, and chariots enchant the eye. You behold the triumph of Cæsar, the triumph of Poets crowned with laurel and riding winged horses, the triumph of Bacchus, the Triumph of Life, or the black Triumph of Death, with its banners of mortality, passing in full carnival to make the women and children shrink in fascinated fear, and the sceptical Florentine gallants pose in those ineffably disdainful attitudes so familiar in the frescoes, or in that well-known cassone front of insolent fair wedding guests in tulip doublets, hose, and cloaks. It is Mayday, and rings of girls are dancing, with songs as sweet as clove-carnations between their lips. There is a noble wedding, and the guests are feasting before the loggia on a great dais under a vast velarium of blue patterned with roses. Lorenzo's boy becomes a Cardinal, and there is a sounding torchlit festival. Or it is the Palio of Saint John Baptist, the Florentine prize being a length of gold brocade that has taken two months to the weaving. Round the Piazza, hung with blue cloths and golden lilies, run the cars. Or the youth of the city will play the Giuccio dei Calci, a kind of football, twenty-seven a side, in the Piazza Sta. Croce; they walk in procession, all "beautiful and vigorous," in gleaming slight sheaths of velvet and satin, all the players hand in hand in full order, with trumpeters and musicians in green and red, a standard-bearer for each side. The guilds keep their ceremonial merrymaking. Fantastic companies for mirth, led by Dukes of the Moon, or the Dove, Princes of the Apple,

Lords of the Swallow, weave their motives into the pattern of the town. The *jongleurs* are at play before the Medicean palace. The Salutati give a great banquet, with majolica and wrought silver, and armorially decorative peacocks. Cavaliers are serenading and sending up rockets before the house of a fair lady: Beauty appears at the window between four wax torches. When the Milanese come to Florence they see the Triumph of Love in the torchlight—Love with gilded wings on a golden car drawn by two white horses clothed in brocade, Love with bannerets and trumpeters, wand-bearers and glittering spearmen all about him. Lorenzo or Giuliano holds tournament in the Piazza Santa Croce, rather pageants of the sweet insolence of youth than angry debates of lances. Lorenzo's is a wonderful display of fifers, trumpeters, pages, and squires, Giuliano being splendid in a tabard of silver brocade, black velvet, and golden feather, while Lorenzo is subtle in a surcoat with shoulder-pieces of red and white silk, and broideries of live and faded roses, his device "*le temps revient*" in great pearls, the diamond "*Il libro*" blazing in his shield.

Nevertheless in cloistral places, on the height of the Convent of Camaldoli, or in the Villa of Careggi, Poliziano, Lorenzo, Pico, Landino, Ficino, and the rest, solemnise the birthday and deathday of Plato as Alexandrian tradition has told it; or in lighter moods, Luigi Pulci reads his *Morgante Maggiore*, ending with irony and chivalry "the things of France."

Before the great doors of the Palazzo Vecchio the Priori make their proclamations. At any moment the Carroccio, the great car, rosy and sacred, image of the city, drawn by scarlet-clad oxen, with the car of the Martinella bell

behind, may draw through the nervous ways; or the clangour call for the Parlamento. Or all the city may sway with a plot like the Pazzi conspiracy. The Pazzi, Baroncelli, Salviati, with the Riario family lurking behind, brood over their plans. Feast day comes at Santa Maria del Fiore, and Giuliano, not well, is persuaded to his doom by the younger conspirators, who lead him to the church, their arms laced round him to know if he be mailed under his raiment. Lorenzo and Giuliano move about in the choir, when the "*Ite missa est*" of the priest brings the daggers out. Giuliano lies dead in his pride of youth; but Lorenzo has gained the sacristy, the bronze gates clang, the town rings with cries of "*Palle, palle*," and the plotters die the death they risked. Even Archbishop Salviati of Pisa is hanged like a commoner.

Or from his fierce altitude in the Duomo Savonarola may cry for "a red hat, a hat of blood," against the rumour of the bribe of a cardinalate; and, after the city has danced round the Bonfire of the Vanities, of poetry-books and lutes and pictures and priceless toys of ivory and alabaster, and swayed to his preaching with tears and sobs and cries, find how terribly the flesh can shrink from such vivid wear. But, before that, he has led his friars, and his imprudent holy children, wearing the red cross, over the Santa Trinita bridge, back by the way of the Palazzo Vecchio. Or his new Cyrus, Charles VIII of France, an odd uncouth figure in black velvet and mantling gold, followed by the chivalry of France, the Swiss infantry, the Scottish bowmen, makes an entry into distrustful Florence. Bigi or Palleschi, insolent Arrabiati, frolicking Compagnacci, collide together. Later there is pestilence and famine in the streets. Capponi is dead, and

Charles is gone; the city, always rebellious to popes, yet writhes under an interdict; the crowd grows dangerous at the contests of Franciscans and Dominicans and their fierce psalms before the Ordeal of Fire, the fight is savage round San Marco, and the end of the prophet is with the three black scaffolds in the Piazza. Continual conflict stormed in the blood of these lucid people, whose very Baptistery is builded, partly at least, of the stones of the temple of the god of war.

But Leonardo, Florentine, and more than Florentine, reconciler of conflicts, returns again and again to paint the quiet inscrutable face of Mona Lisa, that lady of importance and soul of seven veils. Gallants throng to see the pretty girls in Perugino's studio. Botticelli is rushing about distractedly because he has dreamed that he is married. Raphael's bright eyes and Madonnina air make him welcome to the older artists. Michelangelo is trying to teach his Andrea to draw a dragon, annoyed by the sight of Leonardo's Andrea, with his fleece of yellow hair, clad in green and rose, delicately carrying home some grapes and white bread to his master's fastidious table.

VII

It is a city vibrating with music. From the vineyards and fields of Tuscany the stornelli and old vintage-songs, "intolerably sweet," float in through the gates, and tender tunes the heavenlier from Saint Francis' lyric progress to his Lord. Lorenzo's mother, that friend of saints and humanists alike, makes carols for her children. The German Heinrich Isaac sets Lorenzo's own pagan rhythms of delight and regret, to mingle with wine and kisses

through the dancing carnival, to mock and plead when Florence goes a-maying, to invite when all the folk follow after the "Lord of Love" on the day of Saint John. Intricate lauds and madrigals are the more pensive pleasures of quiet citizens. On midsummer evenings, in the cool loggie of the villas on the heights the spirit of music wanders out and in the long dialogues on the ethereal impossible theme of Platonic Love; and Marsilio's lyre concludes all visionary and exhaling speech in a rapture of sound that loses the failing words of men to find the accents of the angels. In the Duomo the crowds listen to great organists. The Squarcialupi Codex will soon store up in the Laurentian Library that vanishing sacred mystery of music nobly written in black notes and red. The Gregorian plainsong in the churches begins to rise and fall in lovely welling waves under waves. "Stop, therefore, all this figured music" cries Savonarola, in vain. The lute, first touched in Spain, the aristocratic lute, primate among stringed instruments, with its own delicate tablature, the lute, dear to princes, lovers, poets, imagined by rare craftsmen in shapes romantic and bizarre, instantly engages fine Florentine fingers. Fair young men like Leonardo, with prelude, interlude, and postlude of more ravishing notes, evoke old songs of Cavalcanti, sudden new songs of their own, to trouble with aching sweetness the violet dusks of the Spring.

VIII

The figures petrify and become more ominous as political and religious strife strangles like weed the great lily of the Renaissance. In 1513 the Medici return in a

triumph of myth and history, with them the subtle Bibbiena. Two popes may come from them, Leo with vague eyes and folded face, Clement the weakling—but they are a finished race. Giuliano, who talks so gracefully in the *Cortegiano*, who, though a slightly evasive figure, remains engaging, tolerant, *gentil,* with the morbidezza grace that attracted Leonardo, dies at Fiesole, for all its caressing light and air, pleading in vain for his old friends in Urbino, and is borne to burial with flaming torches, and helm and sword in mourning. His insolent nephew Lorenzo brings a fair bride from France; and they lie dying at the same time of the dreadful malady that is the price of base pleasures. Machiavelli puts on his best furred rich raiment to keep company with his books, and forget his wronged and wronging city. Guicciardini broods over its histories, cold with disdain and regret.

In 1529 Florence dreams again of Freedom, and defies both Emperor and Pope. At the end of the Via Ghibellina, in the convent where the Lady of Forli died, Caterina de' Medici, a smooth, controlled little girl of eleven, comes to the grille and tells the excited and besieged Florentines that she will be a nun. But they forget her, struggling with treacheries and great forces. "Thus was suppressed by arms the liberty of Florence."

Michelangelo, saved from the penalty of his part in the defence that he may complete the tombs of the tyrants, creates in the sacristy those dreadful archangels of doom and disaster out of a whole world's melancholia of reaction, his mind torn between the moods of *The Victory* and the *Pietà.* Ippolito, reluctantly a cardinal, the son of Giuliano of Nemours, graceful and bitter, moves surrounded by folk of Barbary, Tartary, India, for he loves

the exotic. The dark duke Alessandro, like a figure of Lust out of a masque of the Seven Deadly Sins, listens to Cellini, who will strike him a medal; and his lithe kinsman Lorenzaccio, moving by him like a Mephistopheles, says he will indeed design him an astounding reverse for it. John of the Black Bands, whom his anxious mother hid for eight months among the nuns like another Achilles, moves a whirlwind through the place, at first a mere unconscious consternating energy, an *enfant terrible,* slowly realising himself as a great soldier. When he is eighteen he weds Maria Salviati, fluette and pale, with great eyes and red mouth, with angry loving heart, a bride of infelicity, all passion and nerves to be bruised against his armour, in the street where Dante saw Beatrice. He rides noisily about the town, mad for horses and banners; but soon he finds he can make an army as an armourer a sword, and at twenty-four he is a powerful instrument of war.

Finally, a new epoch, the listless, sceptical, grandiose sequel of a great era, quiets the city, and his son Cosimo I, Sforza and Medici, is Grand Duke of Tuscany.

IX

Such was Renaissance Florence, with all the wrongs, caprices, aspirations of haughty natures. The stones of Pisa cried out against her. Yet she kept undying that lofty idealism of unspoiled youth repeated for her again and again by her artists, Angelico, Luca della Robbia, Donatello, Gozzoli, Leonardo, Verrocchio, Michelangelo, and at the end, with much of charming perversity, by Cellini in his Perseus. "Florence est, après Athènes, la ville qui a

le plus fait pour l'esprit humain," says Renan. However her sons might wander, wounded or rejected by her, upon their hearts they bore the light but sure impositions of her image, within their brains her haughty refusal of things mediocre and unshapely. Cruel and tender and beautiful at once, of all cities she most typified the intellect of the Renaissance: and how bitter it was for her greatest citizens to see her expire with the glory of her peculiar period, the lines Michelangelo made for his own great Sleeper in the sacristy, yet murmur darkling:

"Sleep is sweet, and yet more sweet is it to be of stone while misery and wrong endure. Not to see, not to feel is my joy. So wake me not! Ah! speak in whispers."

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Cosimo de' Medici	1389-1464
Ficino's translation of Plato	1482
Lorenzo the Magnificent	1448-1492
Expulsion of the Medici	1494
Death of Capponi	1496
Savonarola	1452-1498
Subjection of Pisa	1509
Return of the Medici	1512
Second Expulsion of the Medici	1527
Surrender of Florence	1530
Alessandro made hereditary Duke	1532

(See also previous Chapters.)

CHAPTER IX

The Papacy and the Renaissance

I

It is absorbing enough to contemplate the conspiracy of secular circumstance and sacred tradition that carried the Vicar of the crucified carpenter to the seat of the Roman Emperors, and created a supreme spiritual authority in the very citadel of temporal arrogance. Comprehension of the august institution of the Papacy involves a sympathy with a paradoxical human nature unlike that of the Teutonic races, for the history of the domain of deified Cæsars made it easy for Latin minds to distinguish between the man and the office, minds naturally not disinclined, besides, to consider that, even as the God, so might the representative be commingled of good and evil. The central figure of Rome could not but behold his episcopacy of souls materialise into those earthly glories demanded by the genius of the City. So the pressure of that vast insolent tradition altered the bishops of Christendom more and more into princes of spoliation, forcing them to inherit, instead of the seas of Galilee, the hills of Olivet and the lilies of the field—the golden Vatican, the heathen San Angelo and the triple tiara, obstinately bidding them render no more unto a distant Cæsar, since they were more than Cæsar themselves. The essential worldliness of the lordly town, kindled afresh by the new wind that blew all qualities into wilder flame, presents us with

popes who are at best a high-building Augustus, a Julius Imperator, lord of battles, or a Hadrian pondering the bowed head of Antinous. Behind the gates of St Peter's, inwrought with the stories of Leda and Ganymede, they maintain the cult of a god indubitably confounded with the Prince of this World. Even the exotic beasts of the imperial arena survive symbolically as the decorative adjuncts of the Popes. If Pius II the gentle inclined most kindly to his Latin-versing parroquet, Sixtus IV had his eagle, and Leo X his lions, his leopards, and his elephant.

II

To a certain degree the Papacy yielded to the stress of the Italian Renaissance, yet was its deadliest destroyer. It is true that in Italy this wave of time might seem to have reached its crested moment, that a race or an age no more than an individual can sustain indefinitely an astonishing expense of passion and imagination. But, at the Sack of Rome, Italy had not yet exhausted her possibilities of intellectual and emotional expression. There was strong promise of delicate and difficult subsidences through the more undeveloped and less objective arts of music and literature, and through the keen curiosities of exact science. Humanism had practically accomplished only a drudgery that seemed no drudgery in the zest of rediscovery; nobly recreative things in that kind remained to be done. If Michelangelo and Raphael had carried the plastic arts as far as they would go on certain lines, it was not necessary that their successors should seize only on what could be merely exaggerated into bombast and turgidity. There were sweeter, more intimate, ele-

ments in their legacy that might have appealed to sincerer disciples; and in the manuscripts of Leonardo lay hints toward many a new departure in technique. The *abrutissement* of the soul characteristic of post-Renaissance Italy, graced as it was by the posed elegances and witty gestures which give the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries their peculiar and unsurrenderable savour, was not a fatality. Reaction was certain to befall some time, but not so terribly as it overtook this country, in the deadly acquiescence of the conquered, its natural genius entoiled in the manners of Austria and Spain, and gagged by a novel and malignant form of the Inquisition.

III

With few exceptions, the Popes of the Renaissance were eager lovers of art and humanism, though their greed and wrath incessantly ravaged that Italy which was the garden of those great flowers. Some of them had a real sense of the new tolerance, and some share in the vision of Truth, seen darkly in many myths; but their cynicism, their carnality, their hard paganism as of Imperial Rome *rediviva*, so shocked the earnest thinkers of the Teutonic races, disinclined as they were and are to the indulgent ironies of the Latin mood, as to drive them into the many-motived rebellion against the Church which initiated the two fierce reactions of Reformation and Counter-Reformation; and it is difficult to say which was more mortal to the spiritual liberation promised by the early Renaissance. Even the nobler effort of the Popes worked for evil, because of its Roman arrogance of quality. So Leo's half-hinted dream of a world religion, a

reconciliation of the gods under the dome of St. Peter's, proved deadlier to Papal power than the flaunting sins of the Borgia. For the great cathedral could not be developed without money; therefore German lands were exploited and exasperated by Tetzel and his misused Indulgences. Besides, the pomp of the Papacy and the antagonism of its policy towards an independent Florence wrought steadily towards the shifting of the centre of humanism to the less original, less Hellenic, but more materially powerful city—not a desirable effect.

Still, despite the fatality that strangled the loftier endeavour of the Popes, it was not visible, till their temporal ambitions were absolutely at stake, that they must in the end become reactionaries. In the greater Renaissance years, the Papacy became settled as distinctly Italian in its character (the Borgia was a very Italianate Spaniard, and Adrian of Utrecht a brief mistake). This was, on the whole, fortunate for Italy, though unfavourable to the stability of the Church beyond the Alps, since the cynical and insouciant Medicean Popes, for example, were entirely unable to realise what kind of people these German reformers might be. In Italy for long the new spirit was little inhibited by the Popes, for her scholars, adept in the dualism of human nature, did not vainly attempt to impose the victories of the reason on the mysterious power that lies behind music, love, and religion. Her ironical and sceptical humanists either joyously saluted the Church on her own ground, or sportively twitted her from behind the protection of powerful princes: her artists and her poets contrived their parallels between Greek and Christian myth according to their fancy, and often at Papal invitation: her reformers, like Savonarola,

were emotional idealists, not subverters of established law and doctrine, not heretics, in the true sense of the word. None of the other great states—Florence, Ferrara, Milan, Venice, Genoa—was distinguished by a blind obedience to the Primate of Rome. Like those good Catholics, Dante and Jacopone da Todi, they found voices to revile their shepherd if his crook seemed too grasping, remembering that one of these had seen his Popes writhe in hell, and had proclaimed that their malediction could not damn the heroic and imperial Manfred. But Protestantism never took hold of Italy. Her appreciation and need of the Papacy as a complicated and splendid symbol was too great. With any Latin nation, when the passion of her soul leaves the ancient rituals, the lucidity and consistency of her intellect forbid her the compromises of Protestantism. There is no real alternative for the disenchanted Catholic but scepticism, mordant like Voltaire's, or tender like Renan's.

It was as temporal princes, not as great pontiffs, one must repeat, that the Popes proved destructive to the New Learning. Since they had to be either secular lords, or become landless as Christ Himself, and since the heavenly alternative seemed impossible, they preserved that passionate sense of dynasty characteristic of other Italian princes, in itself merely an extension of the fierce Renaissance individualism; and they tore at neighbouring states the more feverishly because of their brevity of tenure, acting at best for the material interests of the Papacy, at worst for the glorification of *nipoti.* So each had an ear for every new invader who would promise part of his plunder, and the Vatican was a centre of foreign intrigue, destined ultimately to rend the great

universal mediæval Church between the dark fanaticism of Spain and the stolid bigotry of Lutheran Germany.

IV

It is difficult to estimate fairly the positive contribution of Papal Rome to Renaissance achievement. On the whole, one could surrender it more easily than that of almost any other notable Renaissance city-state, if one considers courageously, relatively unimpressed by mere mass and ostentation. Still, that is not to say that the glories demand no gratitude, only that the values are more grandiose than exquisite, rarely dissolving in that divine trouble, that wounded but delighted response to a beauty singular and supreme, which seems at times the best thing that existence can yield. Rome produced practically no artists or scholars; she had the receptivity and sterility of all great capitals, spoiled women of pleasure among the cities. Of those whose services were summoned by her she did not ask the best, whatever the facile admiration of the multitude may declare, for she sought in their work only the flattery of her immense vanity. The overweening rhetoric of style necessary to declare the insolence of a centre of imperialism cannot impart the penetrating sweetness of a little city conscious of its own intimate, perilous, and passionate soul; and Rome was unchangeably imperialistic, gathering in the art of aliens, brutalising it a little, blurring at least its peculiar vision, commanding its music to pass through the brazen trumpets of her triumphs. Other cities desired similar things; but the artists were usually their own children, and their personalities were unique, captivating, persuading.

Venice, for example, is a city-state also of a splendid and rhetorical kind; but, sufficient to herself, from her seas and from her Eastern traffic she drew something mysterious, personal, delightful, unparalleled, that excited her artists to exalt her to a myth and a wonder. Rome had nothing of her own to ponder in her heart, because that hard heart was busied with the affairs of all the world. Nevertheless her very arrogance was a great inspiration in its way.

But that arrogance probably became more moving in aftertimes, when decay and dreaminess had smitten it with melancholy, and it could rise in fantastic mirage before the eyes of Piranesi, even as it had been more triumphal in the days of the Cæsars, when the sense of dominion exalted it into a passion. The masterpieces of Renaissance Rome—do they exact from the sincere beholder more than a conventional and passive tribute of praise? Bramante builded loftily, but his plans were not faithfully maintained; and his tradition became more and more lifeless and "Vitruvian," tending always to dead mass, the demonstration of a senseless bulk. Besides, if the Popes raised up, they also cast down, quarrying the New Rome from the old. It may be that Julius and Leo gave Raphael his supreme opportunity: still, that suave and compliant talent, though perhaps at its most forcible, is hardly at its most candid when expatiating on the adulatory walls of the Stanze, already converting the classic inspiration into something of a cold convention, taking it with a casualness how different from the vital impulse with which, say, Botticelli received it! When Michelangelo served Julius with sibyls and apostles and adolescents he wrought more mightily, for

no employer could alter the dark intention of his art, even when it was subjected to an unloved medium; but he was as much vexed and thwarted as aided by his Papal employers. Bramante, Raphael, Michelangelo, however, these three were used well, if they might have been used better. But for Leonardo's perfectly unrhetorical and lonely genius Rome had no purposes. It is a little odd that the most intimate and lyrical expression of decorative art directly due to the Popes is Pinturicchio's painting of the Appartamente Borgia—or perhaps not odd at all, since the perverse often take peculiar pleasure in naïve and idyllic spectacle.

As to the little arts, the arts of the goldsmith and the medallist, these flourished luxuriously in Rome, after being carried over from Florence. Golden roses, swords of honour, morses, rings, handbells such as Leo has beside him in his portrait by Raphael, and all the precious jewelled objects that stud minutely the texture of leisured, haughty, and wealthy existences, were constantly demanded.

The friendship of most of the Popes for Italian humanism was at once ardent and deadly. Sixtus IV, Nicolas V, and Leo X more than cancel out Paul II and the recreant Pius II. Even Poggio and Valla, who had mocked away the *Donation of Constantine*, became secretaries in the Curia. So the papal Court might become more "paganised," more lightly libertine in creed; but, on the other hand, the stings of the humanist critics were drawn, they could no longer be openly of the heterodox. Humanism in Rome is far more than in other cities a matter of pedantry and vainglorious display, though even here it has its moments of proud enthusiasm.

Classical tradition of many colours certainly kindled again in the Renaissance play of Roman life. Stefano Porcaro had his Republican plots. Pomponius Laetus lived like a pagan philosopher. Nicolas V dreamed a great sacred fortress-town like Nero's Golden House. Later, Imperial Rome rose again under the sway of Alexander VI, with all preceding incursions from Egypt and the East. When the plague raged in the city the desperate populace followed after some stray Demetrius to sacrifice a bull to the powers of evil in the Coliseum. In conscious and unconscious application of the modes of antiquity to life Rome was not outrivalled.

The final art, that of human intercourse, went ostentatiously, rarely without something of the excessive display as a sign of mere possession—the Trimalchio note—which makes Roman taste so often questionable, sometimes vulgar. There is pageantry, banqueting, miming, hunting; but the courts of the Popes and Cardinals are never centres of gracious and nobly ordered living like those of Urbino or Mantua or Ferrara. For conversation was the special art of the frank, vivid, well-knowledged Renaissance woman; and since women could not, except during the Borgian régime, appear much in princely places at Rome, it is possible that the Cardinal's moan for a "Court of Ladies," as the one charm lacking to the city, is quite sincere. The bearing of life wants gaiety and grace; there is lead in the levity, and too much room for buffoons and practical jokers. Visitors like Leonora of Aragon and Isabella d'Este are received with something like idolatry. The *cortegiane honeste*, accomplished and versatile, did wonders; la bella Imperia and Tullia d'Aragona were muses and Platonists, apparently

investing their houses with such an atmosphere of culture and courtesy that they became the chancelleries of Rome. Still, even in mid-Renaissance, the Church was formally the Church, and these ladies could hardly occupy the foreground of the picture.

Amid all this art and luxury, more heavily gilded, if less beautiful and sincere than in other cities, one must always keep in mind, of course, the Roman people, unquiet, mobile, incoherent as of old, sometimes pleased with its bread and games, sometimes ravaged by flood, fever, beggary and rapine, and plague, from which dread apparitions the Pope and his Cardinals retired precipitately if they could.

V

Yet for a time, somewhat coarsely as it was enshrined in Rome, the Renaissance spirit appeared not unlikely to penetrate and alter the Christianity of Europe. There seemed a kind of recovery of the Hellenic note implicit in the early idyll of the life of Christ, something flowery, fair, sweet, and open, like the pictures of Fra Lippo Lippi, something, too, of the dreamy Neo-Platonic Christ, the Logos of the Fourth Gospel. But the "pale Galilean," the communist and the unarmed sacrifice, was never, in all the astonishing transmutations of his cult, less of a conqueror. Saints of the passive mediæval type were still precious and desirable objects, but as rare and interesting types, treasurable mascots, things to be collected, like old manuscripts or carved chalcedonies.

As time passed it was the sumptuous heathen strain of the elder religions that grew with the Roman Renais-

sance. The rituals, the jewelled and embroidered raiment of sacerdotalism, the festival processions, increased in glory; even Giulia Farnese was probably more lightly called the "bride of Christ," because Rome could dimly remember precedents in her more ancient rituals.

VI

In briefly noting the Popes of the Renaissance, it is necessary to avoid the tone of the partisan, Catholic or Protestant. The testimony of the time is that of an age to whom people in great place were at once more actual and much more unveiled than they are now. Ambassadors reporting to their states with an emphatic desire to know what their enemies or allies were really like, diaries of masters of ceremonies, other archives, letters, and immediate traditions, if all these accord with known facts, do probably convey more truth concerning the subject than the vague whitewashing speculations of to-day, presented by writers terrified to admit the co-existence of any abnormal or alarming element with what is splendid and vivid and often noble, lest the negative virtues of their own time should lose their justification. Historians are hardly ever psychologists, and when Gregorovius, with all his prejudice, rejects certain matters as impossible because so "repugnant to modern feeling," and another adduces Lucrezia's "appearance" as an argument for her demi-innocence, they seem unfit students of a period to which all things were probable. The stories they reject may not be really acceptable; but the reasons for rejection are unscientific.

Papal history belongs to Renaissance psychology; and

it is most necessary to remember that facts we now confine to the domain of pathology, practically denying to the laity that these matters exist, might be merely incidental to the life of a Renaissance man, with his passion for experiment and his living appetite for antiquity. He might experience, for instance, pope or prince, terrific anomalies of sex; but that was by the way. He knew nothing of the modern, hysteric obsession concerning the matter. There was too much to do, for good and evil; he accepted the mystery of life and made the most of it, as with other things: the conversations on love in Castiglione's *Courtier* are nobler and "healthier" than a modern dialogue on marriage, or any sterilisation conference of a Eugenics society.

Think of the Popes, then, as neither better nor worse morally than other Renaissance princes, but with the sacred tradition of their office illuminating more vividly their lapses and excesses. As a rule they are intellectually not so subtle as their secular peers. After all, the cardinalate was composed of the less efflorescent natures. Nobody who could be a condottiere Prince would be a Cardinal; so men like Cesare Borgia and Ippolito de' Medici plucked restively at their scarlet hats.

Consider these Popes therefore, each by each, for a moment—a strange human procession, crowned with the triple tiara, stiff like idols in their precious copes closed with marvellous morses, stricken with terrible diseases, racked with rapacities and unseemly desires, yet hungry for the beauty of the past, troubled with grandiose visions, fiercely energetic to create new splendours, unreasonably conscious of bearing some heavenly flame trans-

mitted from the very breath of the Christ. Look at their heavy heads, arrogantly stamped on their medals—heavy heads charged with animal Cæsarian will.

VII

The Renaissance Papacy may begin hesitantly with the uneasy Martin V concerned with a distracted Italy and a devastated Rome. No gorgeous figure this Colonna; yet he ended the schism, established his sway, and cared for the saddened churches of the city. Gentile and Masaccio served him, and the gracious lesser arts brightened under the renewed need for decorative sacred symbols. Though he admitted the humanists to his chancery, he rejoiced more in the dust of Saint Monica brought to Rome, for he held Augustine greater than Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates altogether.

The papacy of Eugenius IV betrays much of the same discomfort, that of perpetual struggle, struggle with the heresies of Hus and Jerome of Prague (so different in their mystical emotion from the later Lutheran revolt), and, more exhausting still, with the conciliar principle as expressed especially in the sessions of Basel. Honestly, narrowly, obstinately set on his problems, Eugenius ended by resolving most of them, and affirming solidly the power of his successors. The Council of Basel, where reforming zeal degenerated into self-seeking, where a deserting secretary found that "love is waxed cold and faith is dead," was finally discredited, its antipope rendered impotent; and the aforesaid secretary, Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, brought reconciliation with the dis-

solute and difficult Emperor. Eugenius restored the Pantheon, but he quarried the Coliseum, his attitude toward humanism being more acquiescent than enthusiastic. Still, his monkish temper did not prevent his recognition of the value of the scholars as appanages of court diplomacy, and Leonardo Aretino, Poggio, Aurispa, with others of their kind, were among his secretaries. People like Fra Angelico and Brunelleschi helped him to art. But the great event of his pontificate was the Council of the East and the West, held first at Ferrara and afterwards at Florence. It was not so important that the two Churches of Christendom momentarily subsumed their differences, the Greek Emperor making surrender in the vain hope of reinforcement against the Turk; but the Neo-Platonism of Gemistos Pletho and Bessarion settled richly and dreamily on the Florentine mind, fertilising and quickening like a new cycle of romance.

VIII

Nicolas V, "holy and magnificent," was the best friend yielded by the Papacy to the Renaissance spirit. True, he wrought in the Imperial tradition, overbearing once again the ever-renascent Republican dream, whose standard-bearer this time was Stefano Porcari. Scholarly, brave, courteous, an enthusiast of a high kind, Porcari shared the inevitable fate of all who venture to present a spiritual ideal as anything but a pious opinion. Nicolas was tolerant, passed lightly over the first revolutionary tentative, used the chief conspirator with some tact. But the second effort, begun with the dramatic reappearance

of Stefano at a secret banquet, golden-clad, inflaming the guests with impassioned speech, missed its aim just too narrowly, and Nicolas, naturally perhaps, avenged himself vindictively enough.

"Paganism," as an explosion of mundane splendour and luxury, captured the Papacy with Nicolas. Simple as his personal tastes might continue, poverty-ridden as his early life had been, the Pope was himself a student of witty tongue and delicate calligraphy, as fastidiously expert in all the values of a nobly ordered life as intelligent minds become by the privation of their natural tastes. He rejoiced in being the grandiose protector of scholars, the founder of the Vatican library. Aurispa, Manetti, Tiphernas, George of Trebizond were his translators; the sceptical Valla became his scriptor. Stately embassies he loved, and finished oratory. Rome, in the year of Jubilee 1450, the year when Bernardino of Siena was canonised and Frederick III was crowned Emperor, seemed about to arise queen of European art and culture. But another propagandist religion made a terrible proclamation of its superior vitality, and outraged the glory of both Papacy and Empire, when Constantinople fell in 1453. Nicolas realised bitterly that faith was but a lamenting ghost in the aisles of Christendom, when his belated appeal for a crusade availed merely to cause the Duke of Burgundy to take the Vow of the Pheasant with every circumstance of personal pomp. Consolation for the inveterate humanist and builder lay in his newly devised palaces and churches, his immense plan for the re-creation of the Leonine City, his armies of architects like Alberti, painters like Gozzoli, decorators, jewellers, and embroid-

erers in hosts. If the Turk was master in Byzantium, Nicolas had at least made Rome over again as a city of the soul for the proud in heart.

IX

The Spanish Borgia, Calixtus III, broke up much of Nicolas' created beauty to make galleys for Turkish war; but the princes of Europe now had little crusading ardour, and left Hungary to make her lonely stand at the siege of Belgrade. Calixtus is a pause, a reminiscence, in the story of the Renaissance Papacy; and Pius II, formerly Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, that exhausted and regretful *bon viveur*, diplomatist, and man of letters, did little but dubiously mark time. On the whole, the most he did, as Pope, for the Renaissance, was to offer the tale of his life as a pretext for the frescoes of Pinturicchio at Siena, that delightful series of painted ballate concerning the youth and beauty of the time. For it matters little what state event occupies the centre while these groups of absently smiling smooth-curled boys "assist" in so preoccupied a manner, their hearts probably being with their treasure of love or wrath in the piled-up little cities decorating the distance. Life had been various and fortunate to Æneas, in spite of his long trouble and intrigue in alien Germany. With the elegant Latinity of his youth he had bought, as with coins of antiquity, joyous living and congenial office at Basel. Thereafter, whether he served the Council, or Frederick III, or Pope Eugenius, his pliable dissolute spirit could work for itself as well as for its masters. But the weakly body reacted on the

mind, and as bishop and Cardinal he sighed and sobered, till he became "Pius" at fifty-three, already physically old, tortured with gout and asthma. He was not of those who can thank the past for its pleasure, without reproaching it for the pangs of the present; and the mediæval note apparent long before, when he made his votive pilgrimage barefoot through the snow and ice of a Scottish winter, became strong to disappoint his humanist friends and to stimulate his politic interest in a Crusade. Absorbed in diplomacy, gourmandise of innumerable capons, and minute pageantry of devotion, he retained of his earlier self at least that modern love of landscape for its own sake. A real sincerity illumines his frustrated final struggle towards the Crusade, and his death at Ancona invests his figure with a dignified pathos that life denied it. Pius II was a poor patron of scholars; and, though he did try to preserve the antiquities of Rome, he built little, except at Siena and Pienza. Nevertheless unconsciously he strengthened the Pagan element in the Papacy by the past he bemoaned, yet could not sink under grey waters of Lethe. Men, as he complained, would not forget Æneas in Pius, but continued to remember that one whose weapon had once been the unscrupulous "new" intelligence, who was formerly the gay and cynical novelist of *De Duobus Amantibus*, the ready letter-writer, the complete humanist, the curious, prying observer into matters of entirely secular experience, now sat in the chair of St. Peter. He lacked the intensity of his period. He seems always a looker-on, a more scholarly kind of Pepys, not strongly suggestive of his native Siena, "qui se gouverne plus follement que

ville d'Italie," in that he was incapable of becoming either great saint or great sinner. However, he canonised the one in his townswoman Saint Catherine, and burned the other in effigy as Sigismondo Malatesta, so the impression of him fits in very well after all to the Renaissance drama, as a kind of Chorus of Elders, say.

X

If Nicolas had struck a more than Augustan note, it was some foolish fretful late Cæsar that lived again in Paul II, the nephew of Eugenius, handsome and gorgeous Venetian Farnese, anxious to take Formosus for his papal name, dilettante and amateur of the more trivial things, torturer of the Platonic youth of the Roman Academy. Paul could do no more for his time than Vanity may: contrast what Pride might achieve in Julius. All things that might become personally decorative, jewels, tapestries, vases, decorations, carvings, he solicited eagerly. Loving carnival like a true Venetian, he blazoned it through Rome. He maintained hosts of jewellers and broiderers; but suppressed the College of Abbreviators, that kindly home of needy men of letters. He gathered cameos, with the taste of a collector rather than an appreciator; but he struck and tortured the Roman Academy, founded by that idolator Pomponius Laetus, whose religion was Rome. Heretics the academicians certainly were, conspirators perhaps, enthusiasts all the same. Platina and his friends endured torture no better than Savonarola afterwards; Platina, however, avenged himself triumphantly when he seared Paul in his chronicle with

a bitter flame that prevails against all modern remonstrance.

XI

Sixtus IV, as we see him presented in Melozzo da Forli's fresco, benign to the said kneeling Platina, now his fortunate librarian, while the overweening heavily handsome favourites loom behind, is a figure much more complex in association and more seriously in the Roman tradition. If he loved Bathyllus even to mangling and plundering Italian states for his sake, if his hands could not be washed clean from the guilt of the Pazzi conspiracy, he was undeniably a generous patron of scholars and artists and builders; and the *nipoti* at least lived out their brief and scandalous careers with trumpets and banners, not altogether ignobly. That extravagant, Pietro Riario, who ended his spoliations and excesses at the age of twenty-eight, created festivals to receive Leonora d'Aragon on her wedding journey that became a legend and a dream. In a caravanserai of silk and damask, with masses of cates served on vessels of gold in gold-hung chambers, ushered with riders and trumpeters and fifers, all that ballet, myth, and music could do was done.

The Inquisition was born again in Spain: simony went on pleasantly; Pietro and Girolamo Riario hungered for principalities; Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere pursued a steadier course to a greater end; Colonna and Orsini tore their Rome asunder. But such things happen still. Lust and Crudelitas are still bound in bitter embrace on one side of the medal; but the reverse is as grovelling now as then it was rampant. Sixtus began the Capitoline Mu-

seum; he cared for the water supply of the city; he maintained innumerable builders; painters like Perugino, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, Melozzo, Signorelli, Piero di Cosimo and Filippino Lippi fared well with him; Pomponius Laetus resumed his pontificate of empurpled dreams; Filelfo and his fellows delved steadily in the service of humanism.

XII

Innocent VIII was a heathen of laxer and more unconscious stuff. He openly acknowledged his children, he made a bank for the sale of Pardons. The Cardinals rioted round him; the great family quarrel of Rome became yet more virulent. Ominous events befell during his pontificate. Lorenzo de' Medici, his ally and kinsman, died at forty-four. Granada fell, and the fine fabric of the Moorish kingdom was rended in Spain; the Turk was suddenly stayed by domestic trouble, and the surprising history of Djem, the Sultan's brother, sold from camp to camp and court to court, revealed the perfidies of Rhodian chivalry, and the rapacities of Pope and Prince. Savonarola began his prophetic ministry. Amid these things Innocent lived comfortably, showing great liking for fresco, bas-relief, and an extreme pleasure in jewelling. The Della Robbia craft blithely appeared in Rome. The peacocks of Innocent's device were most encouraging to decorative work. During his time the theatre began to flower, for on Holy Fridays the Confraternity of the Gonfalon did a mystery in the Coliseum, a paradoxical event characteristic of the time. In 1488 Inghirami won his name of Phædra. Pasquin began to be very lively in

this reign. But the Pope had his moments of superstitious fear. In 1488 he issued a decree against witchcraft; and he is supposed to have caused the body of the embalmed girl found by the Appian Way to be quickly buried, because of the strange idolatry that woke before her dead beauty.

Among all the medley and the tumult, the Sultan kindly sent the Pope the Holy Lance that pierced the side of the Crucified. It was received in Rome with extreme emotion, held on high by the handsome and powerful Cardinal Borgia. Bathed in the blood of the innocent during his mortal illness, as the cruel epigram asserted, the easy conscienceless old man passed away, to make room for the most scarlet episode in the history of the Papacy, since scarlet it remains, however to-day may try to reduce the towering bulls of its blazonry.

XIII

I do not wish to reiterate here the recognised incidents of the reigns of the Popes, to be found in all the standard histories, being concerned with them only as exponents of a strange period. That Rodrigo Borgia, the Italianised Spaniard, bought the Papal throne with the frankness which was his most engaging characteristic, seems fairly indisputable; also that he presented one aspect of the Renaissance, the animal, joyous, conscienceless side of Paganism, in a truly mythic fashion. He and his children (whatever you believe of them, they are inseparable for the imagination) form a golden monstrous group interwoven by the chains of the flesh, by incest perhaps, like those other Renaissance families, Baglioni and Malatesti. It was made of East and West, this House of the Bull,

was made like a great slab of Mithraism raised in the centre of Christendom, with Alexander himself for the beloved bull, whose blood gave the wheat and wine of mundane delight, and Cesare for the mitred Mithra, and Lucrezia for the golden unthinking snake of desire among the symbols beneath.

The Borgia became a world-myth of evil; and a tremendous force of personality is necessary to make a myth. What evidence there is—parallels, records, ambassadorial letters, Burchard—on the whole, justifies the myth. It does not matter what is or is not credible to us; what matters is how the family affected the imagination of Europe. Christian nations had a feverish vision of heathen wrong and might triumphal on the throne of Christ, and half-terrified, half-fascinated, lived the madlier for it. There, they thought, they beheld the World, the Flesh, and the Devil—Alexander, the eager, happy lord of glory and power; Lucrezia, the vague, lovely creature of sense, fair white wax in the hands of any moulder; Cesare, the incarnate will, the dissociated, self-centred intellect. On the steps of the throne lay the beautiful Duke of Gandia, cut down like a hyacinthus by what unnatural hand, from what unnatural reason! Casting confetti into the breasts of the ladies at Cesare's festival, gloating over Lucrezia's treasury of pearls, dallying with Giulia Farnese, "the bride of Christ," taking heed for Giovanni, "the child of Rome," watching the stallions with his daughter, rapturous over Cesare in the bull-ring, attending the famous Banquet des Courtisanes in the Vatican on All Saints' Eve, vainly hiding his mignon Perotto under his mantle from his son's vindictive blade, Alexander was certainly spectacular enough to become legendary even in his life-

time. Michelet has vividly described the mingled fascination and horror of the French invaders of Italy, and the rude miracle play of the Pope's family affairs with which the soldiers expressed it. Even France was somewhat shocked; but all the same took the sweet poison then and there, so that France soon became as venturous as Italy, only less passionate, more playful and gallant, with something of *miévrerie* in its manners. It is not difficult to comprehend how the gay and princely Cardinal, so handsome, so irresistibly attractive to women, an irreflective passionate creature charged with riotous appetites, now throned as a great prince grasping a mystical authority, drunken with the heady juices of ancient festival, might feel revived in himself the temper of Macedonian and Egyptian gods and kings, and half-consciously find it part of his sacred prerogative to become as they. The story of Isis and Osiris wandered through the blue of the gospels in the imagery of his chambers.

At times he seemed like a great greedy child, shameless and candid. As the Venetian ambassador said, he was *molto carnale*, that is, all the organic passions were imperative in him, the power of sex in the wide sense of the word, as psychologists like Freud now use it—of all bodily ties. He lived in the flesh, dominated by the cold freed intellect of Cesare—intensely emotional, as in the terrible scenes after the death of the Duke of Gandia, and his public ecstasy when Cesare rode in Rome as triumphator. The panic and silence of his death, Lucrezia's studied propriety in Ferrara, and her half-saintly burial are the apposite sequels of the time.

Perhaps in collusion with Cesare he imagined the shaping of a hereditary kingdom, with the Papacy a dynastic

power, by some cruel process evoking an Italy fierce and strong against the alien. But other rulers had their devious, intensely personal statecraft, and so Lodovico of Milan brought the French into Lombardy. Well! the Borgia could deal with them; and Cesare with his grave beauty and his curled blond hair went into France, with gold and jewels, drums and rebecks, to wed a French princess, and become Duke of Valentinois. Thereafter the fierce energies of the Duke served him well. The stories of the Borgian white powder and the cantarelle are probably legendary in part; still, money was absolutely necessary to these wars, and moneyed folks closely associated with the Borgia were certainly prone to die.

Alexander was tolerant as the times went, willing enough at first to let Savonarola alone as a "chattering friar," though history could not have raised up a more dramatic antithesis than the dark Ferrarese, speaking the language of Hebraic prophecy, and Alexander at his ease in high place, like some mysterious, indolent, wicked king in the Old Testament. Much of his treasure was needed for Cesare; but he was a munificent patron for what ministered to the pleasure of the eye. San Gallo and Bramante were at work in Rome. Pinturicchio covered his private rooms with some of the most engaging decorative fresco in Italy; the Borgia apartments, long sealed by the curse of Julius, vaulted with Egyptian myth, with Alexander kneeling before the risen Christ on the wall, present a loving naïve spectacle of painter's vision and jeweller's work, radiant with happy blue. That lordly squandering of beauty in evanescent matters so characteristic of the Renaissance was a natural way with the Borgia. Festivals on festivals—pageantry, triumphs, and

bull-fights, with Cesare slaying his totem, himself the slayer and the slain, like a true ancient god. Other and more amazing sights bewildered the Year of Jubilee, when even the princess of an imperilled house must venture into the realm of the enemy, because, for some inexplicable reason, it seemed good to be there.

But it was a dangerous Rome. The whole hinted story of Gandia's death, with its lights on the masked man, the Jewish quarter, the cynical testimony of the bargeman, reveal a life like a theatre scene where the trap-door might open at any moment. Nothing mattered greatly except the building of Cesare's kingdom, and that was ominously starred with scarlet incident—the defence and capture of Caterina Sforza; the candid murder of Alfonso of Aragon, that fair young husband for whom Lucrezia wept so inconsiderately that she had to be exiled awhile to Nepi; the terrible wrong and obscure death of Astorre Manfredi of Faenza, the loveliest youth in Italy; the passing of Cardinal on Cardinal who *biberat calicem*; the sumptuous wedding of Lucrezia to Ferrara—till the nameless fever or poison struck father and son at once in the gardens, and Cesare discovered thus the one deadly checkmate he had not foreseen. The trinity ends in darkness. The deserted body of the father is pushed horribly into a too-strait coffin; years after, Cesare escapes from captivity in Spain, only that his body be found naked and dead on a lonely battlefield in Navarre; Lucrezia, Duchess of Ferrara, is laid to rest at last after long secret penance as a tertiary of Saint Francis.

Alexander was able, fair, tolerant, and a just administrator. His great enemy Julius paralleled most of his proved breaches of faith and morality, and ravaged Italy

Photo by Anderson

POPE ALEXANDER VI ADORING THE RISEN CHRIST

By Pinturicchio

(Borgia Rooms, Vatican)

in a yet more deadly fashion. But his sins of the flesh expired earlier than in the over-vitalised Alexander. He also had an elemental fury of action which, in later life, was colourably patriotic, and he died in a high heroical way. The picturesque and dramatic publicity of Alexander's doings shook the Papacy. It had an imaginative appeal like a Mystery of the Seven Deadly Sins enacted within a chancel. The Pope who was seen entering St John Lateran with Cesare, Gandia, and the Mahometan Djem, who was evident throned in the basilica of the Vatican with Lucrezia, Giulia Farnese, and Sancia of Aragon on golden cushions at his feet, laughing through the Mass like the dedicated courtesans of ancient Eastern temples, invited irresistibly to present excess and future reactions.

XIV

Pius III was but an interlude. The Borgian enemy, Giuliano della Rovere, became that great Pope of Battles, Julius. Far from impeccable, he was a much greater man than Alexander, even if his greatness was of the simple kind of wind-like, wave-like energy. His ambition was not much purer, though it was directed chiefly towards the aggrandisement of himself and his office. Something of Milton's Lucifer agitates him; through strife and agony he seems to work to some consciousness of irreparable disaster, like the artist who evoked the Panlike Moses and the weary lovely adolescents for his tomb.

Actually the "pontefice terribile" achieved little, and that little was all to the weakening of the cities that

nourished humanism, art, and splendour. "Pope Julius desired to be lord and master in this world's game," said the Venetians. The League of Cambrai is a worse crime really than any one of Alexander's personal excesses. But, besides Venice, the cities of Ferrara, Perugia, Bologna, and Florence had reason to curse his name. He tore the College of Cardinals; his fury against his own nephew, the Duke of Urbino, who struck to death the treacherous Alidosi whom his uncle loved, was an astounding phenomenon. If in the end he raised the cry, *"Fuori i barbari,"* it sounded ill on the lips of a Pope who had welcomed so many aliens as his allies. Still, a Renaissance spectator forgave much to one who was in himself an image of greatness, of *terribilitá*, even if he was great only as a cyclone or a flaming fire—a dominator, helmed and merciless, leading his armies against the cities. They forgave him even his animal fury because of his vitality. "Il disoit, Ferrare, Ferrare, al corpe de Dio (car il juroit le bon Pape, aussi bien qu'un autre, aussi tenait-il plus de l'adventurier que de l'ecclesiastique) io t'havro." So says Brantôme.

Alexander, Julius, Leo, represent in the Papacy three phases of the Renaissance; and Julius was certainly charged with all its energy and its furious pride. He found artists who were surprisingly suited to his temper, and practically said to them: "Exalt me." No dilettante he, but a conqueror feverish for perpetuation in stone and bronze and fresco. For his glory Michelangelo yielded him proud and bitter service, making him marvels with a kind of angry sympathy, covering the Sistine ceiling with prophets, sibyls, and youths, casting him in colossal bronze, wasting years endeavouring to realise

the magnificence of his tomb. For his eulogy Raphael's melodic talent was forced into the rhetoric of the Stanze. Bramante, Rome's perfect builder, was really attuned to his dreams, and the new Saint Peter's began indeed. But it takes long for such an architectural idea to materialize, and Bramante's harmony was to be marred inexpressibly.

As "Pagan" a figure as any of them, this Pontifex Maximus, this horned god of Michelangelo's, with his rage for the temporal, but a splendid patron of art, whatever his reasons, and a notable figure in the history of Italy.

XV

Certainly he was exhausting; and the College of Cardinals was young, eager for mirth and humanistic elegance, tired of the camp and the struggle. So the Medicean Giovanni found himself exalted in Rome as Leo X, with unprecedented expenditure of processional welcome. He moved, frankly enchanted, to take his papal throne, through antique statues, arches, epigrams on Venus and Pallas, trophies and obelisks, effigies of saints and gods.

Leo's reign, the "golden age" of the Roman Renaissance, has the heavy richness of decay. In the centre is the Pope, a puzzling ambiguous figure, exhausted physically, since it was the way of the Medici to spend the treasure of their vitality extravagantly and soon, young still, but diseased, though keenly awake to the spectacle of pleasure. The much-quoted remark about "enjoying the Papacy" is sufficiently the keynote of his character. Look at him in Raphael's picture, with the heavy face, still alive to policy and enjoyment, though the soul has

almost retreated from the spoiled body, living on merely in the elegant idolised hands, and, one is told, in the sweet voice that dispelled the malodour of his disease. He holds a glass, for his eyes are weak; beside him the little bell and the precious book are signs of the elegances he loved. His tastes were various, for Latin versing, painting, drama, conversation, practical joking, jewels and stuffs, and hunting, in which he took an impassioned though necessarily rather inactive part.

Leonine Rome is all carnival, with the young Cardinals leaping lightly about in their masks, and loosening their coloured balloons on the velvet nights. Triumphs and processions abound, Leo's elephant, the pride of Rome, always much in evidence. There are symposia, more Ciceronian than Platonic, under the laurel and cypress of Agostino Chigi's villa garden. There are wild and cruel practical jokes like the coronation of the poetaster Baraballo. There are great feasts, such as those of the aforesaid banker Chigi, lord of the Villa Farnesina, with almost frantic demonstration of luxury. There is music, music everywhere. Something more intimate and gracious lingers in the salon of Imperia, where, in a setting of gold and azure, even the grave Sadoleto, besides Beroaldo, Chigi, Inghirami, may be seen lifting her Latin and Italian books. The Cardinals walk in the Stanze with keen ironical faces—Bembo, Inghirami, Bibbiena, Ippolito d'Este, brilliant and ruthless, fiercely of his race; in later days Ippolito de' Medici, rider, musician, scholar, soldier, hating his hat of red; Pompeo Colonna, Cardinal Farnese, with set mouth and dark indecipherable eyes, Petrucci, the "Cupid of the Cardinals," for all his wilful beauty destined to tragic end through a childish con-

spiracy from which the gay Pope knew how to wrest much compensation. Raphael goes followed by troops of flatterers, like a Prince. Gracious children, like Federigo Gonzaga, hostage of Mantua, with his long curls and oval face, look on at all strange, gallant, and sumptuous spectacles; it is part of their education.

Although, at the lightest, there is something of the arena in the diversions of Rome, and something of the stage in the setting! And indeed Raphael and Giulio Romano and the rest, if they are hard at work, are at work on the "curtain."

Yet Rome is lively. Pasquin takes Protean shapes. All objects are chiselled and perfected, and merchants of every luxury and every art abound. The painted Nicolosa, loved by Lorenzo Duke of Urbino, walks reading Hebrew psalms in the churches, fan in hand, maids behind. Luther comes to the holy city, and departs horrified at the pageant of monsignors and *hetaerae*. Erasmus comes, and is infinitely fascinated by the concourse of artists and scholars. "Only the floods of Lethe" could drown for him the memory of Rome and its corrupt, witty, and dazzling conversations.

Impressions vary considerably as to Leo's part in the great age, probably because his own attitude is really indecisive and inconsistent. If he was a patron of literature, he cared rather for Latin poetasters, and for improvisatori, than for folk of the calibre of Erasmus, Machiavelli, or Ariosto. If he loved art, he found Michelangelo an "alarming man," and set him uncongenial tasks, delighting in Raphael chiefly for the facile, melting, and courtly elements in him. During his pontificate Leonardo came to Rome, and left it again,

undesired. Leo was serious only in his passion for humanism, and that of a "decadent" kind. Still, let a court adorned by men like Beroaldo, Aleander, Bembo, Sadoleto, Bibbiena, Sannazaro, Vida, have its due lustre among the princely entourages of the world. Libraries he created sumptuously; and the drama was acclaimed in the unpriestly mirth of the *Calandra, Mandragola,* and the *Suppositi*, though the scenery, ballets and moreschi of the interludes seemed to intrigue the spectators even more than the play. And all the minor arts were generously encouraged to decorate every pontifical gesture.

Yet Leo's direct incentive to some Renaissance efforts little counteracts the deadly chance that confronted him, smiling among his young Cardinals, and discussing the immortality of the soul, with the Teutonic obstinacy incarnate in Martin Luther. Neither Leo nor his Gallio-like messengers could comprehend the serious dangers presented by that antagonist, and so the venom of theological differences infected larger issues, seething fiercer and fiercer, retarding the development of Europe. At the same time, Leo's purely dynastic policy, pursued in the tortuous shifty manner peculiar to the later Medici, though it seemed to encourage the steady family growth he desired, apart from disastrous minor consequences like the spoliation of the gracious state of Urbino, ended by alienating from the Papacy all the candidates for the Empire—Henry VIII, Francis, and even the orthodox Charles V.

A dubious personality! And it may be that he had his dreams of a larger Italy, though his house afforded him weak instruments for such aspiration in the languid though attractive Giuliano, his brother, and his dissolute

nephew Lorenzo, made Duke of Urbino, for both of whom was reserved a more terrible glory when they became pretexts for the myth of Michelangelo's imaginative despair.

The Rome of Leo cannot be spared from the historical memory, the Papal Rome in which it was conveniently held that "what is true in philosophy may be false in theology," when Bembo anxiously warned Sadoleto not to deprave his style by reading Saint Paul, when the story of Cupid and Psyche was garlanded round Cardinal Bibbiena's bathroom, when Chigi's banquets outdid those of Lucullus, and Raphael painted the reconciliation of all philosophies in the School of Athens. Leo's heart was naturally where his treasure was, in the Court of the Belvedere, where the Hercules, Ariadne, Venus, Apollo, Laocoön, stood among laurel, cypress, orange-trees and fountains; and the heart of a potentate might be in a very much worse place. It was a Rome of great urbanity, with a velvet blooming beauty, all music, humanism, and laughter. Yet the odour of the sepulchre lingers round it, as literally about its music-loving Pope, for it is the city that shall bring Italy low, the city that never knew love from lust, nor could allow the soul free play with matter. At moments Leo shows the conscious frivolity of a disillusioned mind; he has the mocking tolerance of those conscious of approaching ruin, like a Charles II or a Louis Quinze. And that ruin is not far away when the joyous Pope dies in agony, with only his jester, Fra Mariano, beside him.

All the protagonists in the dying world of the Renaissance culture were young. When Leo was thirty-nine, Francis was twenty-two, Charles V was sixteen, and

Henry VIII twenty-four. But even youth will not avail without sincerity.

XVI

The weak, unenlightened, and alien reform of Adrian of Utrecht, bewildered monastic figure in Leo's palace, counted for nothing at all. The vain virtue of his brief rule led only to the fatal election of Clement VII, bastard son of that Medici slain in the Pazzi conspiracy. As Cardinal Giulio de' Medici he had seemed Leo's right hand, and effective in his fashion. But as Pope he showed all the folly and purposeless craft reiterant in some of the members of his family, with none of its peculiar genius, most apparent in the great Lorenzo. Since he had no vision, the people perished. Without sincerity, loyalty, or any dominating passion except insistent family greed, he played traitor to Francis and Charles alternatively till he had exasperated both, besides enraging the Colonna and Naples. Far more than Charles, or the tragic Bourbon, he was himself directly responsible for the dreadful sack of his city, and even more directly, since Charles was distinctly unwilling, for the still greater crime of the subsequent sack of Florence. However, the terror and danger of his position during the overthrow of Rome brought him a sympathy he hardly deserved. For eight days Spanish mercenaries and Lutheran landsknecht, strange companions from the Emperor's dissimilar domains, an awful rabble of starving, suffering, and leaderless soldiers, both Freundsberg and Bourbon dramatically dead, tortured, pillaged, ravished, and slew; and they returned again to the terrible business. It was not

that Rome endured more than other towns had endured, often from Papal troops, but that when rape and violence darkened the city which was the grandiose symbol of the spiritual power, the mind of Europe quivered dizzily as the sacred superstition of the inviolable place gave way, and the Papacy fell as a prize for the spoiler. For a time, indeed, Clement might have become a mere "mass-priest" again; but the conservative temper of Charles saved both Pope and Papacy. The sincerely orthodox Emperor and the insincere Pope, greedy through all his fears, met at Bologna, and ended the Italian Renaissance. Spain and Austria set their feet in Milan; Florence, vainly faithful to her careless ally Francis, was seized by the Imperial army under the Prince of Orange, and given to the most dubious of Medicean bastards. Giovanni, the hero-faun, was dead. The young Ippolito had to be a Cardinal that the sensualist negroid Alessandro, probably Clement's own son, might be duke in Florence.

XVII

It is true that the Renaissance activity is not suspended suddenly, that Michelangelo and Cellini still have work to do, that Venice, because of her glory apart and separate, flowers long and late, with Titian, Tintoretto, Sanseverino, Palma Vecchio, and others, before "the fruitage has to drop." Paul III, the Farnese, brother of Giulia Bella, the "cardinal della gonella" in his youth, is a Pope in the Renaissance mode gone cold. He loves building, scholars, and painting, in his way; and his hateful son Pierluigi carries the worst traditions of Papal *nipoti* to crueller excess. But philosophies and dreams

wither. The nobler souls, Contarini, Sadoleto, Pole, become doubted, for the Church is suddenly conscious of her dogma. Paul most reluctantly agreed to the Council of Trent, opened in 1545, since, despite the Papal hatred of the recognition of œcumenical rights, he was compelled to consent to a demand formulated alike by the University of Paris, the Emperor, and the Lutheran party; having agreed, he captured it with his Italian prelates, so that it never touched the problems Charles was honestly anxious to solve. It made reconciliation impossible; but Paul was more concerned with maiming the Emperor's authority, for family interests, than with his spiritual dominion. Under the transitional Julius II the Council studied nothing but dogma, leaving the impassioned and emotional souls among its children to be thereafter for ever silent or suspect. Paul IV, who had been Caraffa, the zealous Inquisitor, begins the Counter-Reform. Even Vittoria Colonna's *Passion of the Redeemer* is marked for destruction. The cold cruelty of intolerance indeed defines the position of the Church and sets the division of the sword between it and Protestantism. But, as usual, it also masks the cold hypocrisy of the soul; the Renaissance dies out with Cenci revenges, and with the tragic gallantries of the convents.

XVIII

During the Renaissance years of changing ideals and passionate will it was impossible that the Papacy and the Church should go unchallenged and uncriticised. Eyes renewed by the historic sense looked at these, some with new scorn, some with new comprehension. The criticism

was of various kinds, part of it internal—that is, expressed by those who never would have dreamed of destroying the great tradition—part of it external, and destructive, because in no case did it exist uncoiled from strong political motive. What we call the Reformation is not part of the Renaissance proper; both that and the Counter-Reformation were included in its natural sequel of revolt and reaction. The long antipathy between purely Teutonic and Latin countries made the religious secession very easy when it was so much to the advantage of the territorial princes. At first scholars and artists were drawn into sympathy with what seemed a war for intellectual liberty, and mystics yearned towards the idea of the uninterrupted flight of the soul towards God; but all these fell away on beholding the rise merely of a new intolerance at worst, as in Geneva, a new kind of compromise at best, as in England. For the artist and the scholar there are only three attitudes towards the problem of the soul and its God—Catholicism of the mystical kind, implying some continuous or merely recurrent Pascal-like suicide of the pure reason, some dissociation of the life of faith from the life of the intellect, or some form of more or less Platonic Pantheism, or sheer agnosticism. The arrangement called Protestantism can but end in sterility and ugliness, nor do the early Jacobean and Caroline writers, for whom the Church of England was still warm and rich with the incense of Catholicism, serve to disprove that notion.

The Reformation was pure calamity, in its embitterment of the long religious wars that followed, and in the enforced reconstruction of the Catholic Church, opposing bigotry to bigotry; but the Popes were as much to blame

for it as the Princes. They cared nothing for the corruption of the German clergy; they were more inimical to the efforts of their own champion Charles than his Lutheran feudatories; their passion for their merely secular interests blinded them absolutely to greater issues.

XIX

To resume, as the passion of humanism and art subsided a little, it was evident that the Church itself was divided by two kinds of critics. It still had its saints; but it was curiously and subtly paganised. There arose a band of mystical spirits who would fain have redeemed their Church with new fires, would have revivified her only by the flame of an emotional ardour for purity and beauty in conduct and meditation. Of those descendants of Dante and Catherine of Siena, who yearned to see their Church indeed the Bride of the Gospel Christ, some were like Savonarola, the Pauline ascetic, others were quietist, with the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic vision of beauty and the shadowing soul—of the order of the Beloved Disciple. The *Oratory of the Divine Love* (1519) intimated the latter longing. Vittoria Colonna, Ochino, Contarini, and Pole were all touched with this desire for a greater harmony between the Church and the love of God. The second group, of more arid and reactionary nature, had a fierce revulsion to belief in formal dogma and the repression of all strange dreams —to the Inquisition of the Spanish type, to the *Index Expurgatorius*, to the Jesuitism of Ignatius Loyola. Unfortunately for Europe the second group triumphed over

the first, which lingered on as a kind of heresy in forms of Molinism and Illuminism. Charles V, though in temper allied with the dogmatics, stands by himself as a critic, conscious of the strength of the Lutheran position, impatient of mere Popes, devoted to the Idea of the Church itself, and prepared to sacrifice some personal conviction to the maintenance of its integrity.

Among the antagonistic critics, early prepared to destroy as well as denounce, Martin Luther stands preeminent, as if fatally chosen to avenge old German wrongs and humiliations wreaked by stronger pontiffs. He founded a party essentially political, perplexingly ready to trade with Emperor, Pope, or Sultan—no passionate Husites, no Utraquists thirsting for the burning Cup. A monk unfit for the monkish life, he naturally hated the incompatibility between the ideals and the performances of his Church, and solved the problem by abolishing for himself and others those rules intolerably severe for ordinary human nature. He was of the temper that hates the impossible, just as some have a consuming fever to follow it. In spite of all the hero-worship of Protestant countries, Luther is clearly a vulgarian, a champion of "commonsense," that is, of the needs of the "average sensual man" in the way of religion, resenting any arrogance of idealism and beauty. The Luther who was uncandid with the Emperor and unfaithful to the Peasants, stood for the little coarse territorial Princes his protectors, and for the bourgeois, who were slowly becoming more and more a power in Europe and needed a religion to suit them—a code of behaviour to maintain the decencies of life, to regularise sensualism comfortably, calling it, robbed of its adventure, domesticity.

He it is who is exalted by the picturesque but prejudiced Michelet as the "founder of the family." He founded the family with a random nun, and justified bigamy to please Philip of Hesse, his protector. Certainly he was obstinate, courageous; and at first, exalted by his discovery of the Bible, he had a strain of mystical grace in his evangel. But that disappeared quickly when the Peasants' Revolt sprang from the idea of freedom in God; thereafter he could not sufficiently preach obedience to Princes, nor carefully enough purge his following of dangerous elements like Anabaptism and Zwinglism. He had no new spiritual manifestation—others had defied the Pope before him; but his figure became inextricably involved with the question of German nationalism. Very different figures hover near him, that condottiere of controversy, Ulrich von Hutten, and Melancthon, weary of the quarrel, the one moderator, really anxious for peace. The New Learning in Germany was at first strongly anti-papal, because of the sloth and ineptitude of the German clergy so fiercely satirised in the famous *Epistoloae Obscurorum Virorum* (1515). The schools of Nürnberg and Augsburg, citadels of luxury and irony, reacted against the brutality of Luther, hating both extremes. Erasmus and Reuchlin, the two great extra-Italian scholars, wearied equally of a quarrel degenerating into mere invective on both sides.

In other lands this antagonistic criticism of Rome was victorious or not according to the political crises of the time. In England the change was very slowly and reluctantly begun because the king was enamoured of a cool-headed lady who made his divorce the price of her favours, and accomplished partly because of the duel

with Spain, and partly for the love of the monastery spoils. Jean Calvin has more poetry in him than Luther, the black and bitter poetry of the extreme to which his French lucidity and his scholastic training drove him. Supplanting the power of the Pope by the tyranny of an imperfectly understood Book, longing for theocracies and pharisaisms, he gripped the icy republic of Geneva, and enthralled timid spirits in the despotism of his implacable will. Scotland, torn by political discontent, caught his dark Old Testament evangel from Knox, and confused it with her freedom: since the best-armed part of her was to reject Catholicism and the beauty of the Renaissance with Mary, the extremest dissent suited her best. Besides, that strange country, compounded of passion and reticence, pride and misery, therefore perhaps singularly prone to madness, found something congenial in those doctrines of predestination, and unpardonable original sin, blind submission to the absolute God of destiny—doctrines of doom and dread peculiarly favourable to the insane. But in her more delicate and dream-like places, in her aristocracies of passionate and desperate hearts, the old religion has held its own to this day.

This is no history of the fierce political evil of the Reformation; it must suffice merely to indicate that the real Renaissance criticism of the Church was that of the freed intellect, of "the spirit that denies." Leonardo's mocking implications, Shakespeare's agnostic melancholies belong to this kind. Ironic, pitiful, tolerant, comprehending, "modern" completely, it is found in people so varied as Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne, Cervantes. Marguerite of Valois was a courtly example, though she was *dévote* in the end. The position of such detached

minds was difficult. Contemplating the mirth and tragedy of human things, they could only deride the folly and hypocrisy of one side, without finding comfort in the equal bigotry of that which claimed to stand for freedom. Rabelais could confound all in laughter: Erasmus might write satires and be vexed in spirit. Their spiritual inheritors were not to be for many a century. The wisest word is spoken by Montaigne, urbane, smiling, dubious, invincibly curious, satiric, yet impatient of the hasty reformers of immemorial tradition, setting the keynote for both sceptic and devotee, ancestor of natures so diverse as Diderot, Pascal, Voltaire, Renan, Anatole France. "Je laisse à part la grossière imposture des religions de quoy tant de grandes nations et tant de suffisants personnages se sont ons enyvrez; car cette partie estant hors de nos raisons humaines, il est plus excusable de s'y perdre a qui n'y est extraordinairement éclaire par une faveur divine."

Reform and Counter-Reform, each ended in the hardening of dogma; new Protestant and new Catholic alike agreed in hate of that free spirit, adventuring in strange worlds of imagination and philosophy, which was the soul of the Renaissance. Galileo, Servetus, Bruno, Campanella, Molinos will pay great penalties for its persistence within them. Spain, ever incorruptibly orthodox, though strangely independent in behaviour, will decide that the Church can be saved only by making an idol of the Pope she has so frequently ignored, branding her dreadful sincerity on other Catholic countries with her peculiar form of Inquisition, and emasculating them with her baroque Jesuitry.

The Teutonic races as a whole found that it suited

their steady materialism to develop a theology that kept their God in order, shrewdly reducing the religious instinct to a ritual of respectability, a rule of conduct necessary to the mental comfort of the average man, and a mode of locking the poor and the luckless in subjection. But Protestantism is failing steadily in all these ends, for it cannot give ecstasy, except in the cruder and more violent phases that revert to the orgiastic Eastern forms of worship; it cannot console the materially wretched with that mystic comfort, that Secret Rose of beauty hidden in the Mass which the ancient Church holds fast through all her wrong-doing and wrong-taking. The Latin races in the end have had to decide between her and scepticism; the Celtic peoples cleave yet closelier to her, except those who have accepted the fiercer extremes of Protestant "dissent," as if, since they must drink emotional intoxication from the chalice, crude alcohol will do if the ancient wine of the Dionysos-Christ be spilt. The supreme magnificence of the Catholic Church ended with the Council of Trent; but she must persist as long as the need of religion persists, for she has reconciled within herself so many elements desired by the unanalysable human soul—she with her Annunciations, her Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows for the woman, her Virgin and her Magdalene mysteriously twined as in the older religions, her Nativities and Epiphanies for the Child, her Lents and Passion Fridays and Easters for the mythos of the agony of man, her ritual of pain, propitiation, beauty, rapture, her God sacrificed and transubstantiated, her appeal to what in humanity

> "is permanent, obscure, and dark
> And of the nature of Eternity."

Invitation to Renaissance Italy

While her tradition mingles the subtle sweetness of dying Asiatic gods, the Hellenic mysteries, the Galilean tenderness, the Pauline asceticism, the Alexandrian vision, the Roman pomp, the Gothic ecstasy, the Franciscan simplicity, the superb Renaissance effrontery, the humilities and passions of innumerable saints, in her gorgeous symbolism of the miracle of the spiritual life, she continues to fascinate the sophisticated and the simple in the lovely democracy of her rites.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Pope Martin V	1417-1431
Pope Eugenius IV	1431-1447
Council of Basel began	1431
Emperor John Palæologus	1425-1448
Pope Nicolas V	1447-1455
Fall of Constantinople	1453
Pope Pius II	1458-1464
Pope Paul II	1464-1471
Pomponius Laetus	1425-1497
Platina	1421-1481
Pope Sixtus IV	1471-1484
Pope Innocent VIII	1484-1492
Savonarola	1452-1498
Pope Alexander VI	1492-1503
Alexander divides the New World between Spain and Portugal	1493
Pope Julius II	1503-1513
League of Cambrai	1508-1509
Pope Leo X	1513-1522
Oratory of Divine Love founded	1519
Pope Clement VII	1523-1532
Sack of Rome	1527
Council of Trent	1545-1563
Emperor Charles V	(*b.* 1500, abdicated 1555, *d.* 1558)

(See also previous Chapters.)

CHAPTER X

The End of the Renaissance

I

That the high pulse of the Italian Renaissance should fade and fail in diastole is no matter for wonder: it was but a submission to the laws of life. As the extravagant rose of the flowering azaleas must pass while summer still is young, as the radiance and might of an individual life subsides through ultimate resignations and dim degrees of death, so the mysterious efflorescence of an age of genius must suffer a mortal change. Even ideas that seem absolute and eternal have their mutations, which does not mean that they are irrevocably lost, or that the liberations accomplished, however imperfectly, by periods of mental and spiritual excitement, like the Renaissance, do not avail us today, though they seemed to vanish again for a time during the return to authority, if not to faith. From the Renaissance passion for Hellenism, for instance, unreasoning and uncritical as it was, the great art and science of archæology was born, to persist until the human mind is humbled and pensive under the restoration of buried civilisations and lost religions. And if we now may consider these with the imaginative sympathy which they demand, it is because Renaissance minds like those of Leonardo, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Cervantes, began to regard life with ironic, tender, and melancholy detachment. It was time

that the highest kind of agnosticism should enter—or re-enter—the world's history, for its corollary intellectual virtue of tolerance had become a necessity to its farther development; and neither Catholicism nor Protestantism seemed likely to forego the arguments of the stake, the rack, the gallows, *la peine forte et dure.* The faith of Saint Francis was a beautiful thing; the faith of Loyola and Torquemada and Calvin is best admired from a safe distance in time and place. When the spirit of man began to interrogate the spirit of God, thrusting aside all interpreters, it was natural that the Church should seek to interrupt that bold colloquy. But the time for the dread dialogue, which may prove but a monologue, had arrived; and undaunted it still presses to its unfathomable conclusions.

It might indeed be argued that the spiritual energy of the Italian Renaissance had not actually been exhausted, when the Counter-Reformation and the political dominations of Spain and Austria frustrated its farther expression. The art of literature, for all such prose as Castiglione's or Machiavelli's, all the sweet songs of Lorenzo and Poliziano, all the dissolving masque and music of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso, writing mediæval romans d'aventure in a new manner, had hardly uttered anything comparable with the high strophe of Dante, the springtide lyrics of the poets who were his friends, or the intricate cadences of Petrarch. Nor could the best of Bandello equal the best of Boccaccio. Renaissance literature was to find its climax in other countries, where painting and sculpture were less immediate to the soil. Italian architecture, again, might not have so soon lost its spontaneity had not the Counter-Reformation at once

strengthened the rigid authority of the Palladian convention and encouraged the seductive Baroque of Jesuitism. And, again, the passionate Renaissance curiosity which was the beginning of modern science was sharply challenged when Galileo stood before the tribunal of the Inquisition, and Servetus perished in Geneva, though, snatching protection from political differences, sheltered by potentates independent enough to play with dangerous views, the inquirers persisted, refusing to lose the tradition of the quiet and almost secret groups whom Leonardo had known in Florence and Milan.

II

The failure of civic patriotism before the assaults of the massed armies of kings and emperors is one major cause of the collapse of Italy and her Renaissance civilisation. City-patriotism had provided an admirable medium for art and personality. In war the natural jealousies of the little states blinded their eyes, and none of the later Renaissance princes had either the far-dwelling mind of a Lorenzo de' Medici or the pacific craft of a Lodovico Sforza. When holy Rome fell a prey to the famished and leaderless horde of blond Lutherans and dark Spaniards which Charles V had left to roll madly about Italy, a lost force of unspeakable peril, a shudder ran through Christendom because of that symbolic sacrilege. But the Italian generalissimo, Francesco della Rovere, withheld his troops from relief because of the bitter grudge he bore the Medici; the Colonna family rejoiced with the besiegers; and Pier Luigi Farnese, son of the Cardinal hiding with Pope Clement in San An-

gelo, so distinguished himself amongst the furious plunderers that not even his father could save him from "the major excommunication." Florence, making her last desperate stand for liberty, was broken utterly not only by imperial generals, but by the unholy alliance of men called Vitelli, Farnese, Malatesta, Savelli, Colonna, Baglione. When Charles V arrived at Bologna, and found all the dynastic princes of Italy fawning for his favours, the pride of the Italian Renaissance was concluded. He pacified Rome by the tyranny of Florence and lofty marriages for papal sons; Parma and Piacenza ultimately went to the Farnese; Ferrara had Modena and Reggio; Mantua had Montferrat. The Italian lords had become imperial governors, ready to mould their opinions and their manners on Austria and Spain.

III

All the great dissensions of Europe had concentrated on Italy, lying as a spoil to the spoilers. The fundamental quarrel between Charles V and Francis was fought out in the wrecked fair orchards and meadows of Lombardy, nominally in fierce debate concerning luxurious Milan and Naples. The shadow of Charles lies over the changing age, not a portentous enough shadow really for such a dissolution. Strange unloved Emperor, with the open mouth and the thrust underlip that had looked attractive in the face of his whimsical grandfather Maximilian, but that even the art of Titian could make merely passable for him! So many strains, so many claims met in Charles that he seemed grey with cancellations and neutralities. Flemings, Germans, Spaniards, Neapoli-

tans owned him overlord and disobeyed him. The master of realms of gold, he could not pay his armies. So he worked very hard as a politic and patient dissembler, and was as reasonable as might be. He desired a peaceable and Catholic world; but if some of that world refused Catholicism he was content if only it would be peaceable.

Charles could achieve tolerance; but Luther could not. He could achieve chivalry, and Francis, for all his bravura, never did. It was Charles who was amazingly willing to settle their differences by single combat, and Francis who declined the cartel, even affronting the herald who carried it, still an unpardonable offence. It was Francis, not Charles, who swore by the Book, the Altar, and his faith as a Christian gentleman; and instantly broke that supreme vow. Charles could achieve mysticism, as the Pope and the Most Christian King could not. He desired to lead a crusade, while Francis shocked his world by making friends with Suliman. He did unfold the Banner of the Crucified at Barcelona, and sailed to harry the heathen pirates' nest at Tunis; in Rome the Vatican rang with joy at a false report of his death. Wearied out with the accomplishment of vast designs and purposes not ignoble, he went through the Mystery of his Abdication at Ghent; and retired to sit in a quiet room at Juste, happily playing with clocks instead of dominions. Something arid and deliberate in his mind dusted grey all the romantic efforts of his soul. He was the father of Don Juan of Austria; and that inexplicable, magnificent love-child seems charged with his secret dream. But he was also the father of Philip II of Spain, the sharp cancellation and death of his dream.

Italy had seen King Francis, fresh from his coronation, something florid and Roman-faunish, but a pictorial figure of a Knight, achieve his great moment at Marignano. His forces continued to move disconcertingly about Lombardy. When he came again the litters of ladies moved about the battlefields, and Clarice Visconti, "fair as a Venus," was only one of the languid Lombardy sirens who so diverted his mind from the imperial generalship that the paladins of France vainly perished in the field of that Pavia they had called an Earthly Paradise. Francis, who kept faith with nobody, easily renounced his ally Florence; and the French soon ceased to cross the imperial power in Italy. When Charles V rode into Rome to meet the Pope whose deposition he had meditated, it was only a sick soul like Tebaldeo the humanist who closed his window and turned his back on the clamant Progress. Charles himself might be temperate; but his overlordship meant the strengthening of the Inquisition, an instrument disliked by the Italian temper, and a Spanish-Austrian domination which weighed the ducal houses into a cold sensuality that cynically kept the frigid paces of Iberian etiquette.

Locked with the political changes, the weary strife of Reformation and Counter-Reformation went on, both of them anti-Hellenic and even anti-Latin to the core. It was inevitable, perhaps, that the gonfalon of the Popes with their fierce dynastic ambitions should seem charged with the eagles of tyranny, and that the fair dream-Phœnix of freedom should appear to float for a time over the many-motived hosts of Reformers. But there was no straight issue when the Farnese Pope intrigued with the

Lutherans against the Church-reforming Emperor at the Council of Trent.

IV

Let us glance at some later versions of the Earlier Renaissance types. What is happening in Florence?

The figures of the transition have passed. The descendants of the great Lorenzo have disintegrated the City of which he made a masterpiece. Leo, while enjoying the Papacy, has steadily fed his dynastic passion. Il Magnifico Giuliano, with his long neck and charming manner, his soft blue eyes and curling hair, modern, artistic, a little perverse, has died feverishly in the sweet air of Fiesole, vainly imploring his brother to spare his friends in Urbino; and the young Giovanni, son of Caterina Sforza, clothed in black taffetas, has carried the gonfalon of the Church at his funeral. His nephew Lorenzo, a thing of vice and arrogance, with no scruples about Urbino, has gone regally to make his glittering and heartless marriage at Amboise, and returned to die of his sins along with his innocent wife. So that Leo has sadly contemplated their baby Caterina as the sole direct representative of the house for which he schemed so earnestly. The handsome Cardinal Giulio, son of that fair Giuliano who died under the Pazzi daggers, Leo's close companion, has become pope in his turn. Caterina, the Duchessina, lives uncertainly in Florence and in Rome, submissive to Fortune, early studious to please, early wise in the corrupting and relaxing powers of pleasure, a smooth plump little girl with inscrutable gooseberry eyes. Cardinal Passerini is guardian of her and her cousins, the bril-

liant Ippolito, natural son of Il Magnifico Giuliano, and the dusky mysteriously preferred Alessandro, supposed to be the child of Clement. Driven out and restored again to a listless broken town, the unbridled Alessandro indulges his appetites. Yet his the Dukedom of Florence, and his the Emperor's daughter Margaret for a bride. Then the thin bitter face of the strange Lorenzino, the true heir, is sharply seen in profile, and the "Florentine Brutus" puts an end to Alessandro in his lust. In the confusion, Cosimo, the son of the dead warrior Giovanni delle Bande Nere, slips down from Castello, persuades the Florentine fathers that he is not dangerous, and so becomes the first ducal tyrant of all Tuscany.

V

His father had been the child of Caterina Sforza, the armed lady of Forli, and Giovanni, one of the "Popolano" Medici, who admired, envied, and betrayed the elder branch. In her later days, all the audacity and terror of her struggle with Cesare Borgia gone like a shuddering dream, Caterina dwelt in Florence with this last and best-loved child, who inherited all the Sforza energy with none of its craft. Though Giovanni did not live long, his is one of the existences that bridge the earlier and the later phases of the Renaissance. He was overcharged with energy. Hidden like Achilles in his infancy among the nuns, he is soon all fire for arms and horses, dogs, and hawks, and so turbulent that Soderini threatens to banish the terrible child. For a time he is but an appetite and a force. Soon, with a company and a field before him, he is happier. Vaguely he desires a duchy, but most

of all to be a leader of armies. Maria Salviati, the pale lady with the red mouth and the devoted heart, is his adoring wife, but what is one way of desire to him, whose bosom friend, whose brother, Patroclus Euryalas, is the young Aretino? Angelica the Venetian lisps to him in her soft dialect; Nicolosa la Peinte writes in proud Castilian; and Maria sends to his "very delicate hands" a sachet of roses for a bitterer reason still. He has no more conscience than a thunderbolt. Rome sees him live in a sort of bacchanal of *hetaerae* and mignons, the terror of Leo. Fano knows him as a wild corsair. But in war he has infinite courage, patience, and a genius for handling the men, who idolise him: he is even merciful to beaten enemies. Clement is half-afraid of him and his Black Bands, whose banners were dipped in sable at the death of Leo. Yet, if he had not perished while he helped the French, he might have prevented the Sack of Rome. This strange being, who was slowly acquiring self-discipline, and whose savagery had its dainty tastes—for perfume and satin and fine linen and witty talk—made an amazing end. "Twenty men could not hold me did I wish otherwise," he said, dismissing the attendants who came to keep him down while his wounded leg was amputated; and steadily held the candle while the rough saw hewed the ragged bone. His fortitude did not save him; and he perished protesting against an oversoft dying couch. Yet this hero was terrified to sleep alone. His black armour was buried with him; and his great horse, Sultan, died, disdaining another master. The last of the true condottieri, he finished without riding into a duchy. Something simple and ingenuous, as of a natural force, makes John of the Black Bands singular among the plotting

soldier princes of this later period, far sunk already beneath the pride of an Early Renaissance captain like Federigo of Urbino.

VI

From the last of the Renaissance condottieri, turn, before encountering his son, to glance at one who might be called the last of the true Renaissance courtiers, for he was born in sweet Urbino, while his father talked of romantic love and the supremacy of fair ladies with Castiglione's Duchess and her friends in the chambers that looked to the dawn. Ippolito de' Medici was the love-child of the elusive Giuliano who seems to have cared for women sometimes because he was so feminine in mood himself, but who thought not of marriage till the insistent Leo drove him to a political wedding with Philiberta of Savoy. So indignant with romantic love was Ippolito's unwilling mother that she ordered him to be exposed; but a pitiful nurse saved him and brought him to Rome, where Leo, admiring his spirit and beauty, adopted him. Perhaps some jarring sense of this initial cruelty disturbed the tunable strings of Ippolito's mind. Violent and sensitive, he comes a little too late—a courtier without a court, a soldier without a cause, a prince without a city, a lover whose lady would never yield. His regal air and splendid manners caused the Florentines to call him Il Magnifico before he was fifteen; and in the burning air of the high Renaissance Ippolito might have flashed into inspiration. But the lassitude of his father, the lassitude of his failing time, clouded over his fiery mood; and he wasted himself on

gorgeous extravagances and wild fits of revolt, for he was sufficiently fine not to fit easily into the family pattern designed by Clement. The cardinal's hat forced on him to remove him from Alessandro's path, is often enough thrown in the dust. There is a disenchanted quixotry about him, though he never finds a quest. His expenses are alarming: he tells the Pope he keeps so many followers not because he has need of them, but because they have need of him. Moors from Barbary, Tartars, Indians, Turks, move about his palace to please his brilliant eyes, hungry for the exotic. Splendid horses and dogs throng his stables: he is an unequalled cavalier. But a side of him is very urbinate. Dévote and accomplished ladies found Ippolito attractive. Such was Veronica Gambara, one of those aristocrats who affected a picturesque widowhood, whose four sable horses waited in her stables to carry her from place to place, and whose musical voice gave her the illusion of beauty.

The lute, the viol, the flute, the monochord were Ippolito's friends; and he sang sweetly.

"Go tell the ravisher of my soul I perish for her love." So he seems to sing; for the overtone of his life is his passionate devotion to Giulia Gonzaga, the beautiful calm girl who, a virgin widow at fifteen, kept her pure state by the sea, refusing all the prayers of love. This Lady with the Unicorn seems part of Ippolito's longing for rarity. For his poetic constancy she had at least some ethereal kindness. Her portrait hung in his palace chamber at Rome: Caterina de' Medici, slipping softly about, a pale suave child approving her handsome cousin under her dropped lids, marked the lovely thing, and long after, queen of France, tried to obtain it.

Ippolito went about the world dazzling and listless and forgetting to be a cardinal. He created magnificence at Lucca, Bologna, Rome; raised a regiment and went to Hungary with the Emperor, whom he displeased; returned with the audacious Hungarian dress in which Titian painted him, with baton and sword and double aigrette of diamonds, with glowing eyes and lonely unsatisfied air. All his gaillard behaviour said: "I am no priest." But he guarded the body of Clement and cared for the tombs of the kinsmen who had preferred the degenerate Alessandro.

His temperamental melancholy persists Hamlet-like through all his bright diversions. At last he is voyaging to see the Emperor at Tunis on behalf of the "Fuorosciti," the discontented Florentine exiles with whom he has carried on desultory intrigues. Now it seems that Alessandro's iniquities are so adamant that the Emperor may listen if Ippolito speaks. But at Itri the dark duke's messenger drops poison in his cup; and there is an end of this wilful glittering existence that has lasted only twenty-six years. Giulia came to see him at Itri, however, so his end may have been as sweet as Rudel's. Swift, sudden, shining in vain, Ippolito falls through the autumn evening of the Renaissance, and is gone.

VII

With the vanishing of the last grace of the elder division of the Medicean family, the younger branch shoots at last into power, though only for five gross de-generations. None of the charm that filters down from Lorenzo the Great through the dreamier types of his descendants,

like Giuliano, Ippolito, and even the perverse Lorenzino, appears in the younger family. In Cosimo I the Renaissance tyrant becomes petrified. Relentless, graceless, cold —cold in sensuality, in revenge, in ambition—he finds satiety in fulfilment, and retires from dukedom, grimly thrusting on his heir the long desired crown of iris.

Cosimo was only seventeen when he snatched from the opportunity of Alessandro's death a conditional election to the headship of Florence. Then senators thought him a lifeless puppet; even Guicciardini was deceived. We wonder now how Cosimo so effectively disguised his implacable features. Instantly seizing on absolute authority, he tortured and killed till his position was secure, while his white mother, estranged and horrified, lay ill at Castello, or rose to creep gently about Florence, a tall veiled figure, on secret errands of expiatory charity. He did not forget to send a dagger to overtake Lorenzino in a narrow pass of Venice, where the Strozzi family vainly protected him, nor to provide poison for his reputation as a classic exponent of tyrannicide. Lorenzino, the true heir, had really given him his chance; but he intended to discourage the rôle of Brutus in Florence.

In Cosimo the resistless energy of his father was restrained by a calculating brain. For him insurmountable obstacles did not exist: at twenty-one he ruled as a despot over all Tuscany. A terrifying smouldering rage dwelt tigerish in the impenetrable jungle of his personality: when it leaped it was deaf to appeal. And when he decided to strike from policy he was equally deaf to appeal. Yet with a sinister and cruel temper often marches the intelligence of the administrator; and, if Florence grad-

ually died as a city, Tuscany became a powerful state. He had raised an army, he had bought the Emperor's favour, he had married a pale impearled princess. He had turned the Palazzo Vecchio into a tyrant's Castello before he began to pile more tiers on the Pitti for the Spanish lady's haughty needs; and Orcagna's loggia, filled with his Swiss, became the Loggia dei Lanzi.

Dark legends hung cobwebs about his name; and his children came to tragic ends. Maria, so charming with her bobbed hair in her picture, died at sixteen. Was it of slow poisoning because she loved a page? Isabella, wedded to the animal Duke Bracciano, perished as all readers of Elizabethan poetry know. Lucrezia, who became Duchess of Ferrara, faded away at seventeen. And when Cosimo went into the Maremma with the ailing Eleanora and his sons, Giovanni, Garzia, and Ferdinand, returning only with Ferdinand, a dreadful tale ran round of brother killed by brother, of the survivor struck dead by an infuriated father, and a mother lifeless from sorrow—the mother who loved Garzia "as her own eyes." Historians seem to prefer a story of fever. There is nothing improbable in the drama, however: it is psychologically sound. Cosimo had the temper of an executioner and an assassin; and anything is credible of the fury of a man who, in cold blood, when his guest Carnesecchi, the brilliant heretical scholar and courtier and old family friend, sat at his table, suddenly caused him to be chained, and sold to death and the Pope. His reward was the Bull creating him Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1570. So this dull, able, and hateful man put his hands on the symbol he coveted, the radiating bright crown, made of the

images of the wronged iris leaves and the iris lily. Then, his will unstrung, his appetite for power nauseated, he retired to Castello with a pretty girl to amuse himself without dignity; and at fifty-five was ready for the funeral splendours, the jewels and the robes with which the Medicean Grand Dukes and their ladies, who living moved in Spanish rigidity, were now to soften the rigor mortis of the Princes' Chapel.

Francis, who loved Bianca Capello, Pietro the invert whose orgies defiled the Medicean palace and who was suffered to murder his wife, Ferdinand the cardinal who adored Clelia Farnese and antiques, at least a person of artistic magnificence, were all sons of Cosimo. There is no flame even in their evil. It is a degenerate line. When in the seventeenth century the Inquisition sits in Santa Croce and an auto-da-fé is lit in the Piazza, the city of humanism has expired.

VIII

We have gone too far ahead. Even in Cosimo's day, Florence still sang, and wore her colours at festivals, though the lyric delight of her prime had vanished. In 1532, a year of merrymaking, the old potenzie had come alive again. Once more the Abbess of San Maggiore was mystically wedded with a great sapphire; and chariot races dashed round marble goals in the Piazza Maria Novella. Companies clothed in crimson came to fetch Medicean brides to distant duchies. Young princesses with garlanded hair arrived in golden processions to be wedded, but not necessarily to be loved.

In the Casa Bardi a select company discusses the re-

form of the theatre and the "stile rappresentivo." It is the period of Academies now: elegant and futile discussion has begun in earnest. Music rises and falls in the new contrapuntal way: by the end of the sixteenth century connoisseurs are demanding "bel canto." The beautiful bronze *Idolino* with its pure lines rises to accuse an age that has forgotten the understanding ecstasy of a Ghiberti. It is not Cosimo's, though found in his time. He, however, has the sinister tact to prefer the strange little Etruscan figures which, one morning, Cellini finds him working over with small chisels.

Behind the Pitti palace the Boboli gardens will vegetate into baroque and rocaille. Verrocchio's Ball and Cross fall down from the Duomo as if in pure weariness of the slackening lines of Florence. The loose and hideous Hercules of Bandinelli, the sprawling frescoes of Vasari and the dull rhetoric of Ammanati, insult the reticence of Florentine art. The Baroque is at its ugliest in Florence.

"Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds."

One bright audacious figure only comes to join the sculptured company of Florentine youth; Cellini's Perseus is the last kinsman of the Davids and Saint Georges of old—a little heavy, more than a little wanton, not so lithe as its own wax image, but still enough in the old vivid tradition to be a marvel in its day. And it is Cellini himself, the last great Florentine artist of the true Renaissance kind, who throws a wild light of adventure and a play of picturesque gesture over fading Florence and Rome, as over kindling Paris. Born at the Renaissance climax, without living a very long life he yet assisted at

Photo by Alinari

PERSEUS

By Benvenuto Cellini

(Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence)

its conclusion, so let us consider a moment this remarkable figure.

IX

In the year 1500 the Republic of Florence was aglow with artistic activity. Leonardo da Vinci had returned from fallen Milan, willing to enrich his native city with a masterpiece; Michelangelo was striking out from the mighty mass of marble his young Titan of a David; Perugino was painting sweet Umbrian saints in a thronging studio; the young Raphael, with his Madonna eyes, was pensively considering the sketch-books of his elders. Cesare Borgia was flashing dangerously about the Romagna; and Machiavelli was watching him with fascination and terror. It was Jubilee year; and good men with twisted hoods trembled at the golden heathen revels of the Vatican. But Florence was still secure and proud when, on the evening of All Saints' Day, Giovanni Cellini, engineer by trade and musician by preference, was walking up and down his room, probably with his flute. The nurse entered with a new-born baby, unexpectedly a son. "Let him be welcome—*Benvenuto*," said the fond and fluting father. By the time that child was old enough to withstand the famous buffet by which he remembered the salamander in the flames, Leonardo and Michelangelo had prepared those great cartoons for the Sala del Consiglio that made Florence "the School of the World"; and Renaissance art had imperceptibly begun to decline.

So Benvenuto Cellini, distinguished among men by the sheer exuberance of his energy, was born at the Renaissance prime and doomed to become part of its tragic

insolent drama of decay. When, maddened by the exactions of the flute, he early begins to push his own fortunes, Florence is already broken in her spirit, and the centre of the Renaissance is shifted to unhellenic Rome. The Renaissance gone cold is Benvenuto's heritage—Roman pomp, and greed, and lust, the Sack of Rome, the Sack of Florence, the shifty Pope Clement, the shameless Paul III, Pier Luigi Farnese, his horrible son, Duke Alessandro, Lorenzaccio, and finally the evasive, avaricious Grand Duke, Cosimo.

Benvenuto Cellini was not cold. He was begotten in the burning time, and he was possessed by the pride of personality. With a wild zest he threw himself upon life and sucked the marrow of every hour, loving, hating, killing, labouring, praying. The alienists, nowadays, take an interest in Cellini's fits of homicidal frenzy, as well as in his ecstasy in the dungeon of San Angelo. Even his own time considered him an "extravagant". But he could be kind and good, with the goodness of a reconciled child, when his pity was moved. Also he could worship beauty like a Platonist. He would even play his cornet, to see the melancholy pure oval of Paulino's face answer with delicate changes to the music.

But he would not be a musician, though his flute, a magic flute enough, sang him into the choir of Pope Clement's chapel and so to singular triumphs in "the lovely secrets and wondrous methods of the glorious art of goldsmithery." For it was in his eyes that Cellini chiefly lived, and in his deft perilous hands. On matter, matter sumptuous and exquisite, he wreaked his joyous senses and his thoroughly romantic soul. The appetite for *cose adorne*, precious things that are tokens of person-

ality, continued to be well served after the great arts had passed into inanity. The sincerity of rock-crystal and virgin gold and difficult enamel and mysterious jewel almost forces a quality on the craftsman. The track of Benvenuto was splendid with urns of lapis and silver, bowls of agate, cups of onyx, casques and sword hilts, chalices, medals, ewers, pendants—damascened, filigreed, graven images. He made rings that were exchanged between powers and dominations; in gold he suspended dragons, unicorns, and sirens, all dripping with baroque pearls, to lie on regal breasts; and his heart's-key silver girdles bound the newly wedded brides. He made a faery goblet of nacre and silver, a flowered cup of crystal and gold enamel for the lips of Diane de Poitiers. He made the great morse of the cope of Pope Clement, and he charged with gold, enamel, and gems the illuminated missal that Pope Paul gave the Emperor Charles when he rode over the razed houses through the antique Arches of Triumph. He made for King Francis the marvellous salt-cellar that was famous through Christendom. He knew the ways of the ruby and the taste and perfume of the diamond—he has said it. And he also moulded the waxen portrait that the Prince Francesco sent to Bianca Capello. All with too brilliant bravura of Heaven and Olympos, perhaps, but with singular virtuosity.

Yet this was only half his life. Not even the Perseus, decadent masterpiece of a corrupted Florence, thick, heavy, though with a perversely charming head and a silhouette of enchanting grace, is his greatest achievement. His astonishing power of adventure was squired by a superb narrative style, so he made a great book without knowing it. The sincerity of the goldsmith's craft

is part of his literary manner. He can tell a story like Boccaccio, and he has great respect for his matter. Meditative at fifty-eight, he sits down at leisure to dictate his memories to a little scribe of fourteen. And, as he remembers, popes, kings, cardinals, rival artists, bravi, comrades, and light loves come alive again, and the speaker becomes so excited that the writing child cannot cope with these rich vehement sentences, hurtling with excess of experience.

It is one long romance of dagger and jewel. Whatever else may be in Benvenuto's life, ennui has no place, though melancholia sometimes sighs. Do you like the quiet and gracious passage when the noble lady Porzia talks with the handsome young man in Agostino Chigi's great Roman villa, painted with Pagan loves by Raphael and Sodoma? Or do you prefer that Decameronian supper when he brings the Spanish Diego, beautiful as Antinous, to sit singing against the jasmine trellis, disguised as a lovely lady? His greatest hour probably comes to him in San Angelo, during the Sack of Rome, when in his high chamber he seems to fire at rose-clad cavaliers with one hand, and melt tiaras with the other, having possibly slain that "dominant figure," the Constable of Bourbon, with an arquebus. His most terrified hour, though he would not allow it, is probably when, for the sake of Sicilian Angelica, he goes to do black magic with the priest in the Coliseum, and the vast terrible place is crimsoned by unearthly fires. His most illuminated hour came in the dungeon of San Angelo, where he was held by that unforgettable Castellan who imagined himself a bat. In the lowest pit he lay, and a beautiful angel came and caught him to the seventh heaven, so that he melted

into the glory of God, and ever after kept a shadowy halo from that wonder. Yet it was a blithe hour also when, with "a little poignard well sharpened," he suddenly replied to all the insults of Pompeo. He had good moments when he shot wild peacocks near Belfiore, fair palace of Ferrara, where he made the silver ewer and basin that his friend the Cardinal Ippolito showed to King Francis. Well! The happiest hours were in France. He could amuse that indulgent prince, now so anxious to forget Pavia and Madrid. In Paris he conquered his fine house with prowess, and there the king would surprise him with a great company, and the beautiful spoilt Ascanio, his apprentice, would hide his sweetheart in the head of a colossal statue. There he made the triumphal Salt, and the long rigid nymph for the satyr-bordered door of Fontainebleau, and revealed the grandiose silver Jupiter bearing a torch in the darkness. There he was paid like the great Leonardo. Benvenuto's voice falters over "Francis, my glorious king." Why did he retire before Primaticcio and Madame d'Etampes, and wilfully refuse to return without a special summons? This Florence of Duke Cosimo is formal and difficult. The Duke is a bad paymaster; the pale Spanish Duchess, who looks always as if she had passed through a rain of pearls, is easily offended. Nevertheless he has had one such exultant hour as he loves when he was casting his adored Perseus, when the rain came down and the furnace failed, till he went out in his fever and threw in all his pewter so that the statue was saved, a little sullen from the chilling of the metal.

"Then I went to Pisa," Benvenuto concludes suddenly. He was hesitating then between the Church and marriage.

He received the tonsure; and married. And the Duke got away from him the humble gentle Christ he made for his own tomb, so that it passed to the haughty Escorial.

Benvenuto offers a cardinal's seal or a gold-garlanded gem bearing Leda and the Swan, while the other hand rests on his dagger; he comes emergent from penultimate darkness, thrusting and praying, his hair and teeth fallen out from the horror of the dungeon, yet with an occult halo round his frenzied head, carrying cups of agate and shapes of pearl, sumptuous things to recover the grace of his potentates; he works at the Pope's sacerdotal clasp, blinded by syphilis, deftly arranging God the Father "seated on the diamond in a nonchalant attitude"; when his rivals accuse him of extreme pleasure in his Ascanios and Diegos, he pleads boldly that "I do not wonder at all at those fables which the Greeks write concerning their heavenly deities"; he fiercely pursues the figure of young Luigi Pulci, son of the poet who loved the Magnificent Lorenzo, riding to ruin on a black horse and snatching Cellini's girl on the way; he hammers silver dishes circled by mythic pairs for Cardinal Farnese; he strikes his medals for Bembo, delicately apostolic in his dignified age, and for the Duke Alessandro, dark and dozing while Lorenzo, hanging over his chair, promises ironically to design a reverse for it that will astonish Christendom; for him even Cosimo occasionally blazes into a dramatic effect and puts on a great air, and the doomed little princes frolic round the artist, Dom Garzia wild with mirth, as he laughs in Bronzino's picture, for the homicidal Benvenuto is easily touched by children. His vitality affects all the people in his tale—the authentic Renaissance vitality that almost

loses the lines of his design in a riot of beasts and flowers, and foams about the bases of his figures in lavish ornament. Even his wayward disciple Ascanio kept enough of his fiery quality to leave a romantic tradition in France. Goldsmith, sculptor, musician, artillery specialist, engineer, writer, hesitating at sixty between priesthood and marriage, Cellini is the last example in Florence of "l'uomo universale,"—with all the high imaginative vision gone that lifted the ideal into the diviner air. God the Father is a superstitious image to him. A Christ is a pattern in silver or enamel. Love and beauty are discerned only as morsels of coloured light. He is blinded by excesses that find no starry excuse in the bewilderments of rapture.

X

The grandiose manner of Rome survived the Renaissance. The subtleties and springtides of the Early Revival had always evaded her august rhetoric: the Sack and the agony could not destroy the historic pomp of the Vatican. Popes and cardinals had formed Renaissance Rome: Reformation and Counter-Reformation did not diminish the magnificence of the princes of the church. Humanism petrified into pedantry, or forced itself into floridity, as the architecture stiffened into Palladian convention or swelled into the soft-bosomed Baroque.

The typical Pope of the closing Renaissance, the Pope accepted for Italy the Index Expurgatorius, the Inquisition, and the Society of Jesus, is Paul III. The Farnese group were to provide a kind of parody of the sensational family in which their fortunes began. In the days of the

Borgia pope, Alessandro Farnese, a gay and compliant young cardinal, has seen his sister Giulia lean her golden head against Lucrezia's as they sat at the feet of the Vicar of Christ in St. Peter's. He was the light "cardinal della gonella" then, and not so scrupulously honest, for he had been imprisoned for falsifying a papal brief. Some hidden woman, flitting veiled about his house, had given him children, legitimised in case his house should perish. Grateful to Pope Alexander, for whose soul he caused masses to be said when he himself was throned in the papal seat, he was also a close friend of the Medici family, whose education he had shared in Florence. So Leo was his friend; and he was closed with the shivering Clement in San Angelo. That entirely shameless beast, his son Pier Luigi, as an independent condottiere, had ravaged the City with the Imperial forces. Nevertheless Paul III, nominated by Clement's express desired, concentrated his tireless and otherwise thwarted energies on tormenting and beguiling the Emperor into the aggrandisement of his offspring. Pier Luigi's cool infamies, unredeemed by any personal brilliance, did not alarm Charles V. The young archbishop of Fano, chaste and beautiful, died at the age of twenty-four from the abominable consequences of this criminal's attack. Yet he became Marquis of Novara, Duke of Castro, was promised Parma and Piacenza, and welcomed into his household the Emperor's daughter Margaret, the widow of Alessandro of Florence, as the wife of his son Ottavio. (That lady so conscious of Cæsarian blood, boyish in her youth, masculine in her age, spent her earlier life with startling husbands.) Pier Luigi was meditating farther seizures when the revolt of his own courtiers brought him to the

end he had so well earned; and the crows sat thick on his mutilated corpse in his own castle-moat. In his heavy way he seems to have attempted to rival Cesare Borgia's astute and daring game in the Romagna. But in this brainless robber there is no touch of "magnificence." He has no manner plotted of mystery and charm, no imagination to evoke the mythic glory half sinister, half attractive, with which Cesare surrounded his own blond head.

In the same way his father, chilly and avaricious, shares none of the golden glow of Roman paganism in which Pope Alexander seemed to bask; the tolerant good-nature, the childish emotionalism which makes the Borgia drama so surprising is entirely absent from the grim Farnese history. Paul III was alike incapable of the great gestures of Julius, the occasional humanist illuminations of Leo, the accomplished manners of Clement. His temperament, however, did not gladly accept the repressive measures which his caution compelled him to recognise. Educated by the bizarre Roman scholar Pomponius Laetus, he had a certain respect for the Latin tradition, and tried to pass it to his recalcitrant children. Having lived long in respect for Michelangelo he could say to him: "I have waited for you twenty years," and compel him to paint the "Last Judgment" in fury and denunciation. The best service he did to art was to arouse all the lazy power in Titian for his family portraits. Though Titian, like Raphael, was an experienced courtier, as a portrait painter, also like Raphael, he certainly forgoes soft flatteries, and achieves both a great picture and the shattering truth. So Pier Luigi, livid in his armour, looks at us dangerously, a sick and loathly beast, yet fain to spring. So his father sits thinking alone in his wine-

coloured cope, with narrow indomitable head, wary acquisitive eyes, close mouth, and long live hands, the wonderful thin fingers lightly clutching. Best of all is the dramatic picture of the three Farnese—the Pope grown small and wraithlike with age except for his intense eyes and vigilant look, like a wicked inviolable idol, Alessandro, the charming cardinal who did not succeed in becoming a second Farnese pope, and the young Ottavio, arrested in the ceremonial obeisance which gives such a sinister line to the pattern. Something vulturish in the linear effect reminds us that these are the carrion-birds of the Renaissance mortification.

XI

The Sack of Rome had meant the end and infelicity of scholarship in the sacred city. Elegant and suave cardinals still maintained great retinues in imposing palaces. Distinguished visitors were still received in the princely way and were exhilarated in the radiant atmosphere vibrating yet from the rays of a sunken enthusiasm. Bembo, made a cardinal by Paul III, died *papabile*. Sadoleto, the serious and noble, maintained while he lived the Augustan tradition of Latin. Paolo Giovio wrote his histories; and Latin poems on unprofitable themes often achieved wit as well as audacity.

Life went on in stately ceremonial, nor were ladies so lacking as formerly. The Cardinal Alessandro Farnese was said to own the three most admired things in Rome—the Farnese Palace, the church of the Gesù, and his daughter Clelia. Ferdinand de' Medici went armed about the Vatican, ruined himself over antiques for his great gar-

den-villa, and made Clelia the queen of feasts. Cardinals in cavaliers' dress, flowered with gold, discovered at supper with fair stolen courtesans, are involved in bloody broils. The banquet becomes more excessive, the manners more formal, as appetite coarsens and violence intervenes more motivelessly. Even those famous courtesans lose their airs of *hetaerae*. Nicolosa la Peinte, who walked, much farded, followed by her escort in the churches, her fan in her hand, reading the psalms in Hebrew, and who toyed with her Petrarch and Ovid as well as her Petrarch and Virgil, is amongst the last of those of whom La Bella Imperià was the brightest, most fragile example. Even little Angelica, who could stammer in Latin, and lisped her soft Venetian to John of the Black Bands, already displays some terror of the pyre.

But the décor is gorgeous still. Raphael is dead, and his triumphant frescoes have lost their bloom in the Sack; but his disciples maintain a tradition of gay and gallant painting. Agostino Chigi's great house will never be beaten for Roman luxury; but the innumerable urns of silver and rock-crystal stand in the brutally splendid rooms of many a marble-incrusted palace. And the villas around the City capture the vanishing poesy of existence in their gardens, where the little cascades run nymph-like down indulgent steps to leap here and there in soft silvery flashes. At the Villa Medici antique bas-reliefs line the beautiful loggia: the fountains gleam in the mazes of box, their basins plundered from the Baths of Titus: dolphins and goddesses are smothered in arum-lilies: the Mercury of Gian de Bologna poises on a flying foot: the flowers exceed the sarcophagi and carven urns that hold them. At the Villa Colonna are "roses, jasmine,

and other flowers, interspersed with birds, satyrs, and great numbers of little naked boys." Amorini on cockle-shells seem to play with the goldfish. Alleys are closed in bay-laurel, and the *giardino segreto* still keeps its enchanted hush.

But down by the river the Oratory of Divine Love has dissolved and faded. Carnesecchi has been strangled and burned; and even the tender books of Vittoria Colonna are branded heretical.

XII

Some of the little states maintained a glittering ducal existence even after they became imperial appanages. Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino, cleave to their gorgeous tradition. And some of the bright figures of the Renaissance prime are visible after the change, tarnished, alas! in their age. Alfonso d'Este, whose fierce eyes had challenged the soft unfathomable gaze of Lucrezia Borgia as a bride, and found her loveable, we see now warlike and terrible, a maker of cannon, resting his brows on the placid and sumptuous breast of Laura Dianti. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," said Alfonso firmly in his device; and profited thereby. Titian reveals him in his later days in wide stiff garments of ceremony, with bronzed look, searching air, and hooked nose. Titian served him according to his magnificence, flushing the "alabaster chambers" of his palace with colours of wild wine and solemn lapis, with the *Bacchanal, Bacchus and Ariadne*, and the *Worship of Venus*, great pledges that the Renaissance was still alive in Venice. But soon Renée of France is distracting the court of the handsome and

accomplished Ercole II, and Calvin is in Ferrara under a strange name. As to Mantua, Isabella, pride of Renaissance ladies, lingers overlong in the décadence. Too plump, too painted, at sixty she requires Titian to paint her as at twenty, she who once sat singing in the Castello of Milan while her ladies drew out her bright length of hair. Alas! Even Titian cannot raise the ghost of that rose. Her idolised boy Federigo, such a gracious child when Raphael painted him in the School of Athens, reappears brilliant, attractive, as one bred at great courts must be, and more than a little sensual, as a boy initiated into life by such cardinals and princes could hardly but be. He can traffic with the Aretine. Still, he is raffiné, he has been a devoted lover, he is an amateur of art, like his mother, and has a caressing way with painters. When he asks Titian for a Magdalene, "a fair woman, as tearful as possible," to give to Vittoria Colonna, one likes his candid estimate of that sweet sentimentalist's taste. For she too lingers, consoling not only Michelangelo but the Angelical Cardinal Pole, that delicate royal Englishman, saintly and ineffective, so beloved in Italy. Francesco della Rovere, who, in his youth enters so pleasantly in the light of torches as "Il Prefettino" in the *Cortegiano*, moves obstinately through these later years, holding fast his duchy of Urbino, twice lost and twice recovered, still a singular paradox of ferocity and courtesy and love of the arts. He drinks of a poisoned cup; and his heir Guidobaldo II is one of Titian's best customers for *nude*. Finally, let it be recorded, to show that the memory of the Borgia was maintained, that the Bishop of Paphos, afterwards Archbishop of Cyprus, dying in 1542, provided in his will for the continuation of

regular masses for the soul of his patron, Pope Alexander VI. Masses in Paphos for the Borgia's soul have a wonderful Renaissance justness.

XIII

The Renaissance came to its most splendid conclusion in the great Republic that maintained so long its separate and haughty existence. When the stately ambassadors of Venice went to salute a newly wedded sovereign they left behind them their great cloaks of crimson lined with vair, and princesses were glad of these regal robes. In the inviolate sea-city the dreamlike magnificence, if not the poignant Florentine ecstasy, of the great period, softly subsides through the crimson, green, and blue of the sunset. Power still resides in her calm senators. When power at last leaves her, she will remain the city of immortal pleasure, where the arts cannot wholly die. The inherent sumptuousness of Venice, the vibrations of her sky and sea, and the secret Orientalism of her temper, so wrought on every style of architecture that it became smoothed and murmurous as a rosy shell. Even the Baroque was overtaken by a dream, and opened into the flower-bell of Sta. Maria della Salute. Her security still made her a sure refuge for all who did not mock the State of Venice. Lorenzino de' Medici and Aretino were safe within her smiling indifference from anything save the secret-tracking assassin's dagger. Her Patriarchate kept its own authority; and she protected Bruno for long, mocking the Holy Father, though, when the Inquisition laid its icy finger on the festivals of Paul Veronese, some pang constricted her heart.

The beautiful indulgent women whom Palma Vecchio and Titian painted, living the gilded and cloistered lives of the East, are not the most enchanting of the inhabitants of Venice. The faery Greek element that wandered through Venetian glories, breathed in from the romantic isles of the Mediterranean, had rested in the charmed Theocritean landscapes of Giorgione, touched the pure line of his Venus, and passed into the dreaming eyes of his young men. This "poesy" of mood which Titian would never have divined of himself, he also found in the young patricians of Venice, who, so near the end of the Renaissance day, appear with a grace of bearing and an essential nobility of expression that set them among the paladins of human personality. Their regular and golden pale features, their almond-shaped eyes, their arched eyebrows, their sensitive lips and fine hands, belong to a perfected and vanishing type. They seem to question life as it goes; and well they may. For they have come too late to find the high opportunity and the fastidious path they need. The Venice of the Triumvirate, for all her physical beauty, cannot provide in her superb and cynical embassies a chivalrous enough duty for these young men. *The Young Man with the Glove* may have been Girolamo Adorno, mournful, tender, and early dead, a passionate lover, an ardent fighter. Here he dreams of something beyond swordthrusts and embraces. Or the so-called *Young Englishman* with the fathoming blue-green eyes and the chestnut hair and the firm sweet mouth—what was good enough for this princely person in the city of pleasure?

It is in the finesse and youth of his genius that Titian moves us most—that youth vibrating still from contact

with the mysterious Giorgione, who with Botticelli and Leonardo had charged Renaissance painting with the timeless reveries which the Venetians called *poesie.* Titian, whose *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the climax of his maturity, was painted the year before Leonardo died, lived for nearly a hundred years, and declined with his period. For all his matchless achievement in colour and dramatic effect, his art of figures surrendered to light, of magical sky and golden horizon, the flattered senses will never satisfy the spirit that asks, besides all this, imaginative beauty.

He is the last great painter to be used like a prince. He dies a Knight of the Golden Spur, and a Court Palatine, and, if his pensions give him some trouble, he is well rewarded. But how he toadies, wheedles, beseeches! How brassily the Aretine works his publicity for him! It is no wonder that Michelangelo looks askance when they meet in Rome.

However, like the stormy Tintoretto, like all the painters of Venice, he maintained the ritual glorification of the sea-city. Later, Tiepolo would resume her worship under a sadder sky. Longhi would record the exquisite frivolity of her lassitude. Canaletto and Guardi would set down her palaces, waterways, and brooding sails. Of all Renaissance cities Venice was in some ways the most fortunate in her resignation.

XIV

In Venice, too, the end of the Renaissance sees the triumph of Aretino. His friend Titian has painted him in the flush of his contented carnality, decked in the chains

and stuffs he extorted from his blackmailed princes, a beast with such brio in his existence that he arrests the beholder. With Titian and Sansovino, his friends, he holds court in a silk-hung palace so open to the sun and air that the opulent animalism of his existence seems a kind of monstrous natural growth. Pander, blackmailer, journalist, publicity agent, pornographic artist, trafficker in antiques, master of all brokerages, and religious writer, the versatile Aretino gets what he asks from all the world except Michelangelo, contemptuous to the end. He is immortalised by medals, and so are his mother and daughter, as if he were some kind of obscene divinity, from "Lampsacus fervid with faces." His tables overflow with the meat and drink of kings. Women with rosewhite flesh and ruddy hair call themselves "the aretines." His rooms declare his passion for *things*—golden cramoisie and white velvet, intaglios like Ganymedes in lapis-lazuli, silver-chiselled flasks, salts and vases fantastic with beasts and flowered with gems, organs for fair musicians painted with dances of children and flights of nymphs, everything precious in substance and workmanship.—Nevertheless it seems he is a faithful friend, and dies as a kind of radiant patriarch, expiring indeed in a fit of mirth.

XV

As the fiery intention and the intellectual necessity die out from the actions of Renaissance men, as ambition becomes frigid and the patronage of art a mere gesture of dynastic vanity or sensual amusement, a change invades the psychology of Renaissance women. Their admirable

equipoise, their silver armour of fine dilettantism in friendship and art, their courageous captaincy of affairs, all their bright equalities, fall carelessly away; and they revert to their old doctrine of "all for love and the world well lost," the doctrine of mediæval Eloïsa, who had been as intellectual as any Renaissance lady. But they revert with a feverish intensity and a more than mediæval fatalism. They peril their lives for a fleeting passion, and accept brothers or fathers as executioners as if these brutes had a right divine to avenge the violated honour of the family. There is not enough logic in their disintegrating natures even to keep them safe. Their hearts and their desires, too long suppressed, sweep them suddenly away through passionate intervals to sudden dooms by dagger and cord which they hardly seek to avoid.

"For a day and a night love sang to us, played with us"—they seem to murmur in faint extenuation of their collapse from the dignities of their Renaissance courts of the prime. Hectic in their chilling world, they protest against its frigidity, the only condition which women find entirely insupportable.

Some of the true Renaissance ladies linger awhile, still eagerly conversing, whether they exchange Bandello-like stories among the fountains and streams of the villa region round ruined Milan, or like Vittoria Colonna keep a well-bred intercourse in half-conventual retreat, more and more absorbed by the dream of a pure religion which will retain with high intellectual elements with an unearthly love. Giulia Gonzaga, beautiful and alluring like sweet music, with fair tresses *inanellata* and dark arched brows, a lady made of pearl and ruby, revived

something of the tradition of Vittorino and her ancestress Cecilia. At sixteen she was a virgin widow and a dowager duchess; so she made her court at Fondi with delicacy and charm, compelling her lovers to be her friends, even the impassioned Ippolito de' Medici. The story that she rewarded with death the devoted knight who saved her from the sudden descent of the Barbarossa pirate by snatching her away in her shift and carrying her through bush and briar to safety, suggests that some found a note of the *farouche* in the resolute virginity of this fair creature. She more and more took her pleasure in Ochino's Lenten sermons and in the friendship of Catholic reformers. "But," said Valdès gently to the pensive lady, "you want me to show you some regal and august path by which you may find God without forsaking the world." She, like Vittoria, like Costanza d'Avalos, found, in the tender and perilous intercourse of minds dreaming of divinity, a sublimation and a diffusion of earthly love into irreproachable, since uncapturable, iridescences of feeling.

In Florence, contrariwise, what lovely and reckless figures are snapped like flowers in the grim house of the later Medici. In violet brocades, with silver garlands and velvet shoes, with broidered red lilies and radiating crowns of sepulchre, its princesses were laid to rest; but not all those light feet crossed the threshold of San Lorenzo easily. The great summer-sweet villas of the Magnificent's harmonious days are stained with blood. Piero de' Medici, who led a secret society for vice, one hot July night stabs his enchanting wife Eleonora, because she had found some solace, and lets her face fall on

the marble hall. Yet she is buried "as fair as sleeping." The loathly duke of Bracciano, when it suits his pleasure, summons his deserted wife Isabella to a country house near Empoli, and strangles her under pretence of an embrace. They go to their doom unresisting. Vittoria Accorambona, who had much to do with that affair, when the terrible Cardinal Montalto, her enemy, ascends the papal throne, confronts the assassins in her turn with fortitude after they have killed her boy brother singing in the hall. I have not spoken of "la pessima Bianca" Capello, the most famous of them all, with her Venetian hair, her white skin and great importunate eyes, who could fascinate most people, but not the vindictive brother-in-law whose right of succession she had threatened by the pitiful tragi-comedy of the substituted child. Hailed in her time as the "true and particular daughter of Venice" and crowned with the crown of Tuscany, given the Golden Rose by Sixtus V for the reconciliation of the Medicean brothers, she was buried outside San Lorenzo and her very name execrated. Yet she was only luxurious, lovely, and desperate at times. Whatever he did to make her his, she remained faithful to her sullen duke Francis in his deterioration till they both came to such a sudden end. Florence could not forgive her for being a Venetian, nor Ferdinand for her intrusion into his family.

Away in Rome, where too audacious ladies disappear daily, the glowing Clelia Farnese, delight of the festivals, finding herself compelled to choose between sequestration and marriage, yields to the latter; and is adored to an advanced age by a young, handsome, and jealous husband. A surprising fate! As time goes on, some of these women, with a return of Renaissance power, take a

dreadful revenge against these family tyrannies, like the tragic Beatrice Cenci.

XVI

Nevertheless, for all the loss of liberty and the cynical kind of despair implied by the closing years of the Renaissance, all the cruelty released by the shock of obscurantist forces triumphant both at Geneva and at Trent, the mind and the spirit of man press on undefeated, the one prevailing over all restrictions in the conquest of matter by science, the other escaping from matter altogether in the art of music. In the most exquisite and evasive of the arts, no ban can overtake the fugitive images, no suspicion indict the opaline subtlety of a cadence; and the most delicate heresies may unfold the wings of a Dove at the chanting of the Mass. The swan-song of the Renaissance is heard in the pure volutes of sound created by the great master Palestrina, in whom all the singing, luting, and violing of two centuries find consummation. Born under Clement VII, steadily working under reactionary popes like Paul III, Julius III, Paul IV the dark reformer, Sixtus V, Palestrina brings out of sack and siege, plunder and tyranny, wrong and conflict, his supreme harmonies of rest and power. The Little Society of Jesus might begin its amazing coil of good and evil, the Council of Trent might darken wisdom, the Inquisition arrogate the powers of hell in the name of God, Bruno might perish at the stake in the Year of Jubilee. In the world beyond phenomena the *Stabat Mater*, with its unearthly chords, the *Mass of Pope Marcellus*, or that called *Assumpta est Maria*, divine

choruses of virgins and angels diaphanous and crystalline, continued to justify Christianity, and to extenuate the mistakes of the great Church which has made itself so perfect an organ for the supplication and adoration of humanity, and so satisfying a mythos of the Passion of God and Man that she remains beyond ultimate disaster so long as she exasperates not the lonely intelligences that strive for absolute truth. For she herself keeps some immortal emotional truth of suffering and pity, like the nine-voice *Miserere* of Vittoria, sung only in St. Peter's till Mozart in listening wrote it down note by note.

XVII

The fading flames of the Renaissance long crept about conquered Italy. Rubens, Rembrandt—no northern artist could realise his own genius till he had known the lovely land which even in its languor could impart a spell to dissolve the inhibiting rigors of Germanic countries, the smallness and snugness of societies banded together against the cold. It is always an organic necessity for dwellers by the North Sea to go down to the Mediterranean.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Charles V	1500-1558
(Elected Emperor 1519. Reception at Bologna 1530. At Tunis 1535.)	
Death of Leo X	1521
Accession of Pope Clement VII	1523
Battle of Pavia	1525
Peace of Madrid	1526
Giovanni delle Bande Nere	1498-1526

The End of the Renaissance

	A.D.
Sack of Rome	1527
Fall of Florence	1530
Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici	1511-1535
Federigo Gonzaga II created Duke of Mantua	1530
Assassination of Duke Alessandro of Florence	1537
Death of Guicciardini	1540
Vittoria Colonna	1490-1547
Death of Valdès	1541
Cosimo de' Medici becomes Grand Duke of Tuscany	1570
Papacy of Paul III	1534-1549
Society of Jesus approved	1540
Holy Office established in Rome	1542
Index Expurgatorius accepted	1543
Council of Trent begun	1545
Pietro Aretino	1492-1556
Papacy of Paul IV (Caraffa)	1555-1559
Death of Michelangelo	1564
Execution of Pietro Carnesecchi	1567
Jacopo Sansovino	1477-1570
Benvenuto Cellini	1500-1571
Titian	1477-1576
Tintoretto	1518-1594
Palestrina	1526-1594
Foundation of Accademia della Crusca	1582
Giordano Bruno Burned	1600

CHAPTER XI

The Renaissance Ferment

I

During the centuries roughly included under the term "Renaissance," Italy was drunken like wine by the other great nations of Europe. All of them were her communicants, either in love or in hate. They might indeed have experienced the merely humanist revival in a direct fashion, but even that they would have experienced differently. The torch of the New Learning was caught from Italy as by the dancers in a bransle: the countries tossed it one to another, France, Spain, the German princedoms, the Low Countries, England, Scotland, all took from her, some giving in their turn. The invaders came and came: her civic life, her industries, her great Eastern traffic, her science, her literature, and her other arts, all perished before their cruelties of desire; but her heart, in breaking, disengaged both her sweetness and her peril.

France, though always intimate in Italian matters (the effects of Troubadour verse, the very name of Francis, *jongleur* among saints, can witness the intercourse), at first a little uncertain of her lovely and unquiet conquest, yet drank deepest of that charm, expressed it in an enchanting hybrid art and in daring personality. This in her turn she offered again, as, for instance, to distract yet more the dark conflicting soul of Scotland. The English, enchanted by Italian adulteries of beauty and passion,

built a great romantic drama out of her stories, and farther declared their excitement by innumerable lyrics, and by an appetite for actual adventure, personal and national, unparalleled at any other period of their history. The German territory, always hostile, mindful of ancient grudges, did feel Italy stimulate what art and scholarship she possessed, although her inimical criticism was to end in a "Reformation." Spain, exotic and austere, took the Spirit of the Renaissance late indeed, but in surprising modes, as in her painters, her architects and her literature, and especially in the modern mingled mirth of *Don Quixote*, though her antagonistic criticism, again, was to close in the resurgent Inquisition.

II

The French Renaissance has a bouquet for the historical imagination altogether different from the Dionysiac revel of Italy. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries France had brought the mediæval genius to perfection in "matters" of romance, in cathedral, city, guild, and a peculiarly intense kind of personality: but for the clash with Italy the succeeding centuries would probably have marked a period of pause and recuperation. Italy had lain comparatively passive and unaware during the Middle Ages—almost unaware, I mean, of the concentrated "Gothic" passion of their ideals, for even the consciousness of Dante contains elements of Renaissance challenge—and so was rested and ready for an intellectual and artistic effort that meant, after all, only the reawakening of her ancient dreams. But France, having just perfected one singular type of culture, could only

superimpose the new pattern on the old, oh! with a grace, a gaiety, a charm of infinite complexity (for there is nothing in architecture so much a pavilion of felicity as a real French Renaissance château), but more deliberately, less passionately, with much of the languor of one that has already known excess. The memoirs of the days of even Brantôme, of l'Estoile, of Marguerite of Valois, to take the more robust rather than the sensitive and studious souls, are extremely conscious of the curiosities of their time. Remember also that this slightly weary France did not come into close contact with Renaissance Italy till the first Hellenic ardours were spent. Leonardo was mature in Florence when Villon went out into the mediæval night of France.

The Renaissance of Italy, I have said, affects one as, above all, a masculine business, so that even the most famous and admired of its women instinctively sought to carry themselves like accomplished boys or like expert statesmen. But the underlying mediævalism in Renaissance France maintains the feminine note so clearly that even its eccentricities become more malicious because more fragile, more conscious. The fascination of *Les Dames Galantes* spaces these courts of love, casts these gracious châteaux into the spring-soft air. The records of the toilets of the mignons of the Valois, deadly as their bright blades might be, show how the men could more than ape the ways of women. They were the seed-vessels of the artistic revival, Marguerite of Angoulême, of Valois, Catherine, Mary, Diana. Women were the real protagonists on both the Huguenot and the Catholic sides. They ruled the House of Valois till Nature avenged herself by concluding it with the morbid king

who was himself half-feminine, the French Elagabalus, not brilliant in any robes of the sun-priest, but pale in black velvet.

France, then, was already tired, perverse, dainty, the France that had long since made Aucassin and Nicolete. She was affected by the Italian Renaissance in its most complicated modes, the Florentine, the Neapolitan, and the Milanese, and, later, superadded to the new sensations by a whimsical access of fashions from still mediæval Spain. Besides, the Renaissance of France, because of the pride of feudalism held hard and long in the land, persisting indeed till the other long-latent fury for liberty and tyrannicide flamed out in the Revolution, was far more essentially aristocratic than in Italy. It was royal and seigneurial. It was confined: those outside the barriers of birth had not nearly so much of that participation in the spectacle, at least, which made the Italian Revival common to all. In France it was more difficult for the poor scholar to grope his way to the New Humanism. In France even a distinguished painter held no very dignified position, when it was a compliment to be reckoned among the king's valets. He was shut off from the larger applause that does certainly fertilise the imaginative genius. There were no princes like artists, and so no artists like princes, as in Italy. And the new gaiety and rather feverish excitement communicated to life expressed itself more in places jealously built apart than in a fresh efflorescence of civic beauty, though it could not but break out here and there in the churches and town palaces. But when the centre of courtly life was moved from Touraine to Paris, the power of that city, which yielded herself to Henri Quatre only at the price of a Mass which

meant a royal humiliation, became one of the most notable consequences of the French Renaissance.

So that period is most apparent as a new kind of Court, a group of curious, extravagant people, heightening the satisfaction and the complications of their own personal desires, till they are consumed within by the strange madness of some of the Italian despots without the odd innocence that invests many of these, some of whom are like ungovernable children. The French nobles retain, as they retained till "the deluge," a quite sincere belief in their absolute difference from low-born flesh and blood, and their inherent right to magnificent luxury. The French Renaissance arts of a special kind of architecture, painting, writing, enamelling, and so on, are aristocratic, esoteric—created for exacting needs. Even the runaway Rabelais, pouring mirth and mockery over the land, uses a style of extreme sophistication.

One must here speak of this Court as a whole, though its phases are many. When the pale Valentina Visconti rode into France with all her exotic splendour and her Lombard grace, she struck a craving into the Orleans blood, that could not easily be appeased, for the luxury and strangeness of the dukedom that bred her. Italian influence filtered gently into France from North and South, from Flanders long in communication with the ports of Italy, from Avignon, Italianate from the days of the papal Exile, from Provence, where René of Anjou, whose kingdoms in the air sound like a blast of romantic trumpets, seemed to create a small Renaissance of his own, with bright Della Robbia work, and the fine artist Laurana, brought to Angers castle, where the chambers were painted with doves and branches of red groseiller.

Photo by Neurdein

THE HÔTEL GOUIN, TOURS

Marseilles, Le Mans, the fantastic Toulouse, echoed Italy; and the restless passionate city of Lyons, with its great silk-fairs and book-fairs, in constant contact with that exciting country, loved "la mode de Ytalie" and seemed to dispose itself like Florence, with cool villas about it. Tours lay in the old Roman path, and, with Blois and Orleans, insensibly yielded to the sweet southern contagion. But not till Charles VIII, that absurd and rather pathetic knight-errant, went on his fantastical and unreasonably successful expedition, was Italian good and evil thoroughly communicated to France. He came back trailing his gorgeous loot of silken and carven things, pictures, parchments, gleaming books. Italian workers broidered the edges of feudal Amboise for him. Building and art became more Italianate under Louis XII, though his court, through most of his reign, was kept too circumspect for the new splendour because of the Breton manners of the obstinate queen. Still, even Louis XII caught the breath of romance in Italy from the pale lilies offered him in all honour from the noble lady Tommasina Spinola, who loved him in absolute chastity, in the dream-like way of courtesy. So at least d'Auton avers. The famous Cardinal d'Amboise in his laughing Château de Gaillon, many of its stones brought as marbles already wrought from Italy, its two bright fountains exultant in their sunny spaces, early achieved a unison of foreign ornament and Gothic structure.

With the later Valois, that curious deranged dynasty, the French Renaissance laughed into power. Francis I was Gallic enough, a knight of the Abbey of Thelema, the faun-like heedless handsome prince at first, formed by idolatrous women and ruled by the daughters of

pleasure. What he loved in Italy most were scenes like Trivulzio's banquet, in Milan, starred and lilied with gold, beset by hautboys and viols, and the Herodiad ladies of Lombardy, "tant gorgiases que c'estoit une droicte fayerye." He would even win and lose scenic battles for them, till destiny betrayed him into prison and pain, and revealed him as a great terrified baby ready to promise anything to get home to his comforters, and, that desire accomplished, willing to grasp any amusement bringing oblivion of his humiliation and broken oath. Hence chosen retinues of ladies, all merriment and coloured raiment, hence bright pleasure-houses in the fresh woods and rivers, and beautiful things made by great minds out of Italy—by Leonardo and Cellini and the rest; and story-books like the *Heptameron*, provided by the most devoted of sisters. But with Henri II and his sons the mingling of Spanish and Italian influence seems to develop an exotic charm, playing over a bloodthirst, a mania, which certainly entered into their courtiers. Henri II, "le beau Ténébreux," impossible Spanish romance dwelling shadowy in his soul, is mated to the Medicean Catherine, but wears to the last the black and white favours of that cool fine connoisseur, Diane de Poitiers. Then Catherine rules, with her priests, poisoners, astrologers, and her "flying squadron," through the moribund François II, the distracted piteous Charles IX, friend of Ronsard and murderer of flying Huguenots, and, finally, with less certitude, through the perverse but imaginative Henri III, insolently moving among his mignons, with white hands and broidered swords, deadly duellists making toilets like women of pleasure—moving between the terrorism of the Guises on the one hand and

the dubious friendship of the Navarrese on the other. Till the race is wiped out in blood, and Henri Quatre buys Paris with a mass—quite as self-indulgent as his predecessors, but very French, tolerant, vivacious, sceptical, indifferent. And after him follow the centuries of rigid formalism in art and doctrine, covering a wild and wilder dishevelment of manners, the beauty of the Renaissance lingering on like a strange dying fragrance in the painting of Watteau and the gardens of Le Nôtre.

This Court of the "Kings of the Lillie," as the old chronicler calls them, presents an astonishing paradox. Look at them one way, and you see a people all grace, love of art, and perfection of demeanour, surrendered to festival, music, and beauty, living with wit and magnificence and elaborate codes of gallantry in those joyous châteaux, or crowding with colour the decorated Louvre. But there are chroniclers like Brantôme, with cynical comment and cool record, noting lives strangely without privacy, and harassed by coarse and cruel pasquinade. For the Catholics, politics became disguised as honour and glory. The Huguenots were not like other Protestants; they were a fierce courtly folk, busy with plot and counter-plot, battle and dangerous truce, provocation and retaliation. The two parties mingle each other's habits; the ladies of Marguerite of Angoulême sing the psalms of Clement Marot at Court; Henry of Navarre has his mignons and mistresses. Indeed both Catholics and Protestants must have their retinues of courtesans and assassins. There are processions, the damarets in curled hair and little velvet muffs, masquerades, stately courtesies, above all, dances—basses danses, bransles, pavanes, minuets, the dance called chaçonne, gavottes, gaillards. Some of them

invite with charming names, "Jouissance vous donnerai," "Confortez-moi," "Baissons-nous, belle." Ladies love to dress like cavaliers; men wear the robes of women. The figures are imposing enough; the Comte de Ligny, a dazzling figure of beauty, grace, generosity, for love of whom the fair Neapolitan princess died, Gaston de Foix, Bayard, Bourbon, Coligny, Condé, Fleuranges, "le jeune Aventureux," Montmorency, the great fastidious Duc de Guise, "the King of Paris," even the Duc de Joyeuse, and Bussy d'Amboise, are not little men. And the women have great qualities. Catherine, child of poisoned parents, with her smooth plump air, her pampered hands, preparing her powers and policies with long patience, Mary of Scots, white and strange, Diane de Poitiers, calm and skilled, the three Marguerites—Francis' sister, kind, blithe, always giving; Francis' daughter, the Duchess of Savoy, the lettered friend of the Pléiade; and La Reine Margot, dark-eyed, eloquent, seducing always with her velvet cap and her lovely neck, extraordinarily happy in her *parures*, lover of the Duc de Guise, wedded in ermine and blazing blue, with princesses to support her, to that Henry of Navarre whom she easily excelled in generosity. All are witty and intelligent—patrons of art, especially of architecture and sculpture. Catherine's building activities were not interrupted even when the political crisis was most acute. Her daughter's memoirs are stories of dances and vespers and music on the river, with odd hints of heartbreaking love and hidden anguish of pride.

All this delicate minute luxury and secretly surviving mediæval superstition of half-Italianised France, the dark ecstasy seeking a new splendour, was worked out in Henry III's Order of the Holy Ghost: "High Mass is

celebrated daily at nine of the clock in the morning, at the High Altar, wholly new made and enriched with foure Colombes of blacke marble, and sixe goodly Angels of Brass: the Table hanging thereon, containeth the Adoration of the Three Kings. This High Altar is adorned on the day of Pentecoste, and soleme Festivals of the Order, with a cloth of State, Coapes, Chasubles, and Tuniques of Cloth of Silver, the ground greene powdered with flames of Gold in embroidery, hardly any place wanting or void, with divers Figures expressing the misteries of our Redemption, and the Armes of the King that was the Founder, in most excellent imbroiderie not to be equalled. The said ornaments, Coapes, Chasubles, and Tuniques are lined with Orange Colour Taffeta. And the Chappell beautified with vessels of Gold and Silver of most inestimable value, and truly worth the greatness of a King of France, especially Henry, third of the Name, Great in all his actions and the most bountiful Prince of his time." So the enthusiastic chronicler.

But the Maries gaze at executions. Astrologers and poisoners haunt the magnificent ways of the sceptical, superstitious people. The Duel of the Mignons carries a deal of wanton grace into dusty death. The great Massacre, never quite explained, shakes the country like a convulsion. The *Heptameron*, made by a sister desperately endeavouring to force her sick brother to smile, is a surprising but convincing medley, though it comes early in the French Renaissance day. Pilgrimage, lust, wrath, vanity, pride of chastity, grace and gracious speech, lovers that die of love, strange codes of passion and responsibility, all show that France could not take

Italy with vitality and frankness. She sickened with it, as if it were a malady that gave the sufferer a hectic beauty. And the exhaustion chilled her into the "Age of Reason," with its underside of black magic and other such superstitions as underlie rationalism, from which revolution, romance, Parnassianism, and wilfully called *décadence*, and more terrible reactions were to come. But she still has the courage of the experimenter, and the subsumed memory of her passionate mediævalism. Heroism implacable and splendid, prevailing even now.[1]

I linger on the French Renaissance because the conflict is so manifest, and because the results are so fascinating in their complexity. Italy had lain chained in Loches with Lodovico Sforza; had been allured to serve as a great master of ceremonies with his friend Galeazzo Sanseverino; preceded by pages, "mignons de couchettes," minstrels, taborers, and coffer-bearers, had ridden in gold and red, with excess of rubies and pearls, to Chinon with Cesare Borgia. The dark sweet blood of Italian women had entered into the haughtiest families of France. Gonzaga blood fed the angered heart of the Constable of Bourbon; Estensian blood, golden Lucrezia's blood, ran in the veins of the great blond Dukes of Guise. Medicean blood, poisoned and thwarted, met the fading blood of the Valois when Catherine in her gleaming litter followed the white-veiled Pyx into Lyons with all the luxury of fallen Florence in her train. Leonardo, like a lonely king, had sat throned apart some few years at Amboise with the brooding faces of Saint Anne and Saint John and Mona Lisa and Leda around him. The pictures of Raphael, that came among the prodigal

[1] Written before the War, and now underlined.

gifts of Leo, had been unveiled with fanfaronnade of trumpets. Del Sarto had arrived with his gracious fatigued air, and gone away to break faith for his wife's irresistible eyes. Cellini had made the long nymph for Fontainebleau and the beautiful chalice for Diane de Poitiers. Primaticcio and Rosso worked out a new and gallant art of decoration in fresco and plasterwork in the festive galleries of Francis' favoured chateau. Throngs of lesser artists and craftsmen appeared—Giovanni della Robbia, Serlio, Pellegrino, Cortona. The French spirit caught the sense of novelty, of adventure, but could only remain steadily French.

So, since the expression of the period was in the development of a peculiar group of people, and these the people with leisure for sensations and intrigue, the arts of Renaissance France are naturally those that can answer to princely needs—a personal architecture, with decorative sculpture, the "little arts" of the enamellers and faïence-makers, and, to some degree, literature. But above all, architecture, of a peculiarly expressive kind, not as in Italy, an architecture of civic pride, or fortressed retreat or scenic background, but building for individual and intimate pleasure, composite as the temperament demanding it. Its delight lies in its collisions and conflicts and subtle evasions and breathless captures. The seething tenderness, the piercing note, the love of floriated detail and exciting skyline is still of the Gothic tradition; the frank desire to arrange for love and pleasure and mirth and for the soft-shod feet of intrigue, the dream of Italy which is not really Italy, are of the New Spirit. Of course there is still some sacred building —St. Etienne du Mont, extravagant and rapturous, dear

jewel of churches, where the two ecstasies meet like Mary and Elizabeth; the charming interplay of St. Eustache; the cloisters of St. Martin of Tours—"The beautiful galleries," as even the dry town record calls them; and the Church of Brou, last outcry of flamboyant Gothic, for example. But the tender confusion, the lithe wrestle, the surprise and audacity as of the *rencontre* of strangers who may be lovers, is secular and aristocratic. The change is made. The builder becomes an artisan, the designer an artist, for those courtly clients. And to all of us the French Renaissance lives chiefly in those springtide châteaux, built apart in their country setting, with Italian pattern imposed on Gothic in a fusion of points and arabesques, whose very names make a music like the names of the ladies in Villon's ballade. In landscapes soft and undulating, under skies pale blue and kind, among remote and magical woods and waters, these castles, for all their considered unisons of Gothic structure and Italian penetrations, sprang spontaneous as may trees to the eyes. Gaiety of mediævalism, gaiety of Renaissance, they laughed in unison from these great seats like little towns, their high roofs challenging the gazer, sweetly offering their wonderful sky-lines of dormer and chimney and turret, their beautiful half-mocking spiral galleries, their provocative embroideries of many devices, porcupine, ermine, crowned salamander, pierced swan, double pair of wings, glorified initials. They triumphed, all captivating and all different, from Langeais, still a fortress-château, its battlement just blossoming into a cornice of mirth; Amboise, Ecouen, Blois, that house of many periods, with its outer spiral stair, a lyric of light and shadow; Fontainebleau, irregular and sumptuous; Cham-

bord by Pierre Nepveu, hunting lodge and Oriental convent of love, with its surprising roofs, all Cupid-beset windows and galleries and strange towers, closed by its bridged moats; the vanished Madrid; enchanted Azay-le-Rideau, rising from the Indre; and Chenonceaux, that house seen at evening like dim violet and ivory over the waters, and many another. Notably there was Anet, a pleasure-house like a city, built for that Diana in whose name so much of the French Renaissance flowered, a place complete from its gardens to its hospitals, full of pride, daring, beauty, decorated with the crescent and royal devices, adorned with glass by Cousin, completed by the great Goujon group of the goddess and her stag. Within the city walls, in Paris, Rouen, Dijon, Angers, Bourges, Caen, Tours and elsewhere, the same blithe and radiant spirit was at work. Over the composite Louvre and the Tuileries Philibert de l'Orme wove its magic. It is not now the time and the place to deal justly with such names as those of Rosso and Primaticcio, the Italians, and their quick French followers like Bullant, Pierre Lescot, Pierre Nepveu, Philibert de l'Orme—all the builders concerning whom the poet, marking the new distinction, wrote:

"Dieu gard, gentils ouvriers et vous doctes esprits
Qui avez le bel art d'architecture appris,
Les uns pour desseigner en plan et en modelle,
Autres pour employer l'esquirre et la cordelle."

Sculpture was harmoniously attuned to the airy opportunity of the new architecture, and Jean Goujon is the prince of carvers. There is none like him to cover the châteaux with a low relief of shy seducing figures, with

a subdued music inviting to secret joy, to set groups of triumphing enchanting line in their noble intervals. Jean Goujon's famous fountain conveyed the divine melancholy of pleasure in the tone of the great ode of Keats, while the *Diane Chasseresse*, dispossessed from her pride of place as now she is, still remains a wonderful evocation of the spirit of sophisticated yet reticent grace. This note of sophistry and frailty is carried yet farther in the mannered but charming work of Germain Pilon, much in request for Renaissance tombs, with their courtly, arrogant *prieurs* above, and the stripped and stricken *gisants* below. A haughtier sculptor was Jean Cousin, who, some still say, made the tomb of Chabot, and who was more the *uomo universale*, since he was also painter, draughtsman, geometer, etcher, art critic, and glass designer.

Painting in France became, like architecture and sculpture, a willing servant to the lives and deaths of this animated aristocracy, developing easily from the delicate pictures in illuminated Boccaccios and Virgils, the tentative work of Fouquet, to the minute portraiture of the Clouets. The engravers in wood and metal, the enamellers of Limoges, the makers of faïence, the bookbinders of Lyons and Paris, the glass-painters, and many other kinds of rare craftsmen, filled the great houses of France with priceless pieces of beauty, made for mondain and fastidious patrons who preferred art as a toy. Dancing was an elaborate art. The music and folksong of the time deserve a special attention. Gay, tender, mocking, scathing often, the songs of the people reveal that, when France seemed one fierce battlefield for Leaguer and

Huguenot, something in the nation escaped fearless to laugh and weep.

But the contrasts and the broad currents of Italian Renaissance freedom are really most invasive in the literature of the day. The aristocracy had their own peculiar part of it, an exquisite, deliberate, court-poetry formed by the Pléiade, of whom the greatest star was Ronsard. With all his theories and conscious Renaissance preoccupation with words and metres, the throbbing fever of Renaissance life beat in his pulses; and he and Joachim du Bellay sang sometimes with a golden sweetness and lyric perfection as never French poets knew between Villon and Verlaine, of the regrets and sweet accidents of those fragile ladies with dark eyes and sunlit hair, Marie, Cassandre, Hélène.

"Mignonne, allons voir si la rose—"

He did indeed "take possession of the lily in one's hand, and projecting it into a visionary distance, shed upon the body of the flower the soul of its beauty"—the overwrought and wanton beauty of French mediæval love-romance, returning from the Hades of Persephone.

Clement Marot, heretic and libertine, neither Huguenot nor Catholic, is really also of the courtly group. Commines, Amyot, Brantôme, L'Estoile, Le Loyal Serviteur, Calvin, in their extremely different ways manipulate French prose. Marguerite of Navarre, mundane and mystic, is notable both in her *contes* and her devotional exercises. But the great French exponents of the Renaissance temper are Michel de Montaigne and Rabelais. And the first, that smiling tolerant noble, whose childhood was made of peasant-lore, Latin, and music, is per-

haps most "modern" of all. With all his passion embodied in his friendship for Etienne de la Boétie, his delight in varied converse, his equal interest in the fortunes of Saint Michael and the Dragon, his ardent belief in the human mind as the organ of knowledge, his delicacy of sensation, so fine that his perception becomes a rare aroma, a kind of spirituality of sense, as in the case of Charles Lamb, his great interest in education ("Il n'est rien de si gentil que les petits enfants de France. Ce sont les collèges qui les rendent ineptes et abrutis."), his calm comprehending gaze beneath which nothing that exists is shameful or contemptible, his infinite curiosity even unto the humiliations of the body, his ethic of sheer "honour," his sharp sweet irony, his meditative soliloquising style, Montaigne is a Latin of the Renaissance, as well as a Frenchman of the modern era. Rabelais' wild mirth and satyric gaiety are of another colour. Like Montaigne, he laughed at monkery, and loved the New Learning and the art of his day partly because it was forbidden fruit. But more than anything in France he expressed the Dionysiac element of the Renaissance. A Pan out of Touraine, born in 1495, the year of Luther and Raphael, he cared neither for Christianity nor the Cordeliers. But he has been trapped in a monastery, this aegipan, all through the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance freedom is superimposed on mediæval subtleties, even as in the life of any aristocrat. So his bizarre cynicism, his unhallowed mirth, is enclosed in a style as sophisticate, as convoluted, as full of surprises and whims as any spiral gallery or nymph in whorling raiment; and the Abbey of Thelema might be built like Chambord. However one may estimate the Book of

Rabelais, as a volume of occult and earnest wisdom, or a sort of phallic dance mocking at all unfertile things, the wayward conscious style, rich with spoils of mediæval as well as Renaissance lore, is an achievement in itself—in itself, for, unlike the style of Montaigne, it is not inseparable from the matter.

The French humanists, of course, like Joseph Scaliger, Salmasius, Casaubon, were soon hard at work, keen, critical, argumentative; but humanism is taken for granted in all Renaissance countries, and has its own history.

III

It looks strange, perhaps, to pass to a little and barren kingdom, still much misunderstood by others, yet it is natural enough, for Flodden field was only one of the red love-tokens that Scotland wore for France. The French Renaissance crossed the sea most definitely with Mary; and, if the bitterness of political strife rent and spoiled the gift, it was French building, French personality, French manners that now affected Scotland, as the French University and the French royalty had already dyed her destiny; and it was a French reaction that ruined the burthen of beauty, for Scottish Protestantism came from the lucid and terribly definite Calvin, rather than from the compromising Luther. In this country, where Celt, Norman, Latin, and Scandinavian have interlocked without fusion, there were and are deadly contrasts. As great spaces of barren moor and sighing forest and dove-grey mysterious waters give a heightened value to certain natural things, like birchwoods rare as illusions of jasper and silver, spring-branches with the

buds-a-break in patterns, cherryblossom singing like an epithalamium, green lakes of water-lilies set in cups of barren rock, exotic, Egyptian, under wild pure sunsets near the miraculous western straits—so the stretches of brooding, seldom-speaking, ironic and tragic people are broken constantly by the leaping-up of personages compact of pride, passion, and imaginative charm, red flowers in a barren and sea-tempered land.

So for embroideries to heighten her ascetic yet impassioned beauty, Scotland long yearned to France. There were always Scots Guards for the French kings, French queens for the Scottish Court, and Scots princesses for the French—not always happy, like the ill-mated Marguerite, the poet, who died saying: "Fi de la vie, que l'on ne m'en parle plus!" Many Scottish villages are still like French towns, a close huddle of roofs round Abbey or Town Hall. Castles had been built high where waters meet, with gardens of red flowers enclosed, and the lily-lea below. With the Renaissance came French musicians, masons, poets. James IV, himself a musician, had four Italian players. For a time France and Scotland communed till the dangerous pride of the nation ranged the new religion and the nobles against the old religion and the Throne. The black and bitter Calvinist prevailed because he became identified with freedom. The land lost her birthright, separating away the old Celtic culture and denying or perverting the Latin, condemning her thwarted soul to centuries of suppression and terrible reactions. But, before the theocracy and the unfortunate union with England, the Renaissance had some play. The land was too barren to sustain much but love and hate. Her sense of the European revival spoke in two forms—

architecture and personality. From Earl Patrick's Palace in Kirkwall to southern places like Thirlstane, so finely insolent, there rose a proud wave of castles, compelled and inclined to maintain their keep-character at their basis, but flowering radiantly like great iris-flowers into ornamented turrets at the top, and graven here and there with a foreign grace of detail strangely intensified in value, in pathos almost, by its presence in a landscape so haughty, in an air so bitter-sweet. Cassilis House by its five little fairy hills where the gipsies came by the river, Hawthornden sunk in its dells, Wemyss Castle going step by step to the sea, where Italian workers carved Traquair House with its sweet romantic beauty, all the defiant Northerly Castles like groups of flowering spears, the high Arthurian Castle of Edinburgh itself where Marie of Lorraine laughed at the English, are among the proud places that keep or kept some seal of "the old alliance." As for personality, the contrasts of which the country was capable were manifest in Mary, queen of idolators, and Knox, lord of iconoclasts. Farther, the wandering Scot, seeking for adventure or learning, is known through Europe. The half-mythical Admirable Crichton who fell with all his life before him one dark night in Mantua, pierced by the treacherous dagger of the ignoble prince his pupil, is the Northern dream of *l'uomo universale.* Even the typical Renaissance pedant is found in George Buchanan. The passion for learning—and for humanism —still burns indomitably, even fanatically.

The Renaissance, touching Scotland through France, was aristocratic and arrogant, almost instantly arousing hostility in part of a populace singularly independent

and impatient of overt control. A warring people for whom Freedom soared high over all!

"For Freedom is a goodly thing
It makes a man to have liking."

Yet more violent in fidelity than any slave!

The building—what is left of it—is strictly royal, places like Falkland and Stirling and Holyrood and Linlithgow palaces, adorned, in their time, for French brides with details of the new gaiety, though the old fortress-character had of necessity to be retained, so that kings had their native Master of Masons as well as their French Master-mason, while the barons, fierce rebels with or without religious pretext, kept the peel-towers as the centre of their dwellings, enriching them with stairways, corbelling, roof-mouldings, heraldic devices. Some wilful excesses of decoration miraculously survive, like Roslin Chapel, insane with roses and sunflowers.

But the folk-song of Scotland is also curiously touched with the Italian dream. For folk-song is concerned with themes of undying interest, not with matters of opinion. Says the demon-lover in the ballad, seeking to soothe the terrified lady,

"I will show you how the white lilies grow
On the banks of Italy."

The Scots had seen those forbidden lilies. Their arrows had broken the flowery courtsoldiers of Milan, and their eyes had gazed on Lodovico's ruined castle of delight. Those "extraordinarily tall men" had considered the haughty iris grow about Florence town, while the great bell toned its angry alarm. The exultant chronicler

of the dead beauty of the fierce Baglioni would have sympathised with the singer of the bonnie Earl o' Moray, who "might hae been a king," who "went sounding through the toun":

"O the bonnie Earl o' Moray—
He was the Queen's Love!"

And the Renaissance pleasure in glowing personality lives in the late ballad of Marie Hamilton, with its peculiar Scots quality of violent heart-break:

"Marie Hamilton's to the kirk gane
Wi' ribands in her hair:
The King thocht mair o' Marie Hamilton
Than ony that were there."

For personality, in this land of clear pale-gold atmosphere, green sunsets, great rain-washed skies, where the blackthorn suddenly breaks into dazzling white like a miracle, has always had its complete value. Those harled houses on the L plan, doorway safe in the angle, all aflower at the top, flaunting, many of them, their French or Italian gardens, have their violent legends, wandering out in songs of love and death. The dreaming, half-heavenly, Celtic strain marries happily with the ironic and impassioned Latin spirit, whether French or Italian. A marriage it is which gave to history one of the most famous of Renaissance ladies, a queen renowned through Europe for her enchantment, even in those days, as if she were a Guenevere or Morgan la Faye—Marie Stuart, lover of love and verse and personal liberty, wonderfully red and white, flower-like and flame-like, whose name still creates an impression as of clashing steel, whom it

seemed necessary either to adore or to kill, the sadist anger of her enemies being only an inversion of the idolatry of her lovers. She came with her French songs and music and dances, her Italian secretary, and her Renaissance tolerance, but to a land already half-Catholic, half-Calvinist, preying violently upon itself, like the Celtic snake-symbol. The Calvinist won for a while this barren, beautiful land of legend, ballad, and song, eager for the exotic, hungry for extremes; and Mary died in Fotheringay by cynical stratagem, her Latin prayers and her Latin cross defending her last moments from the loud preachers who tried to violate them. Yet the religious difference, fiercer and more sincere than in any other country, and therefore more devastating, had Renaissance origin on either side; and the spirit of the great period still lingers in the land where the Latin Chair of a University is the Chair of Humanity, and where proud poverty goes even yet in love with antique learning.

IV

Renaissance England was part of the Continent as never before or since, for the Norman Conquest was a physical invasion, and the Norman lords in a comparatively short period, from the historian's point of view, became absorbed and differentiated from their French kin. They recrossed the Straits only for aggressive wars or for Crusades, though foreign strains did enrich national feeling through those Crusaders, through far-wandering Pilgrims, and through urbane diplomatist-poets like Chaucer, who wove Petrarch and Boccaccio, as well as French verse-makers, into his web of colour and sound.

But Henry VIII might have been, in his prime, the Holy Roman Emperor, and he did gain the Golden Rose of Papal favour. Philip of Spain was his daughter's husband. Elizabeth's foreign policy, meaningless as it was, involved endless coquetry with the great powers of Europe. English adventurers sailed unfurrowed seas; great Continental scholars lectured in English universities; the national consciousness itself, weary of barren civil strife, hungry for new sensations and emotional influences, caught joyously at the Renaissance ideals and expressed them in many ways, chiefly in a literature much too generous and too varied for any detailed appreciation here.

As a Renaissance dynasty the Tudors fitted passably into the conditions of the times. The earlier Stuarts might have played the part of Italian "tyrant" more nobly; and indeed, the court did not become definitely "Italianate" till the most grotesque though not the least intelligent of that dynasty sat on the English throne. The Tudors, at least, had the fierce fibre of the usurper, and the usurper's necessity of conciliating his people with some courtly splendours and patronage of genius. This necessity conflicted strongly with the natural Tudor coarseness and avariciousness. Probably Henry VIII was the most Renaissance figure of that parvenu race. He tried to lure Raphael and Primaticcio to his service, and did succeed in attracting Holbein, who certainly rendered him justice. He had a natural taste for music, the challenge thrown by the Field of the Cloth of Gold had a touch of "magnificence," and in the earlier part of his career he had some feeling for letters. Even the mania of the later period has a certain Italian quality, though its horror is

too crude for tragic effect. But the sovereign most identified with the English Renaissance was Elizabeth, which is to say that the dynastical quality affected matters less in England than elsewhere. Of that queen's uncertainties, her vanities, her greed, her morbid hysteria, her cold and illimitable jealousy that anxiously required of every man his homage, grudged every woman her happiness, enough has been written. Whether she had statesman-like qualities or not is still in dispute; she had able and unscrupulous counsellors, and she had her "Machiavellian" methods. An England which shuddered at the clumsy Massacre of St. Bartholomew as a device worthy of the "devil Machiavel" did not perceive that Fotheringay was more in the manner of Cesare Borgia, though masked with a little Nordic hypocrisy he would have considered superfluous. But, as a nominal defender of a little kingdom against a formidable power, Elizabeth became, like Caterina of Forli, of that "virago" type admired by the times. Also, by making a virtue of her necessary virginity, she unconsciously encouraged the virgin-knight dear to Italian fancy to ride free through English Renaissance poetry. And she was clever enough to fit herself into the gesture needed by the national aspiration. For us, while Mary Stuart lives as a legend, Elizabeth Tudor has become a physiological problem.

The English Renaissance was still in mounting tide when James I succeeded. Absurd as he had become, through the shocks of his birth and the terrors of his infancy, pedantic as must be a pupil of George Buchanan, he loved music, masques, and beautiful young men; and was often kind to letters. The unfortunate Charles I was, of course, the only art-lover among Eng-

lish kings. And the Puritans could not destroy the English Renaissance, which flowed too deep to be affected by political change. Cavalier and Puritan poets were alike its witnesses, and Cromwell's Latin secretary resolves all the Renaissance antinomies in his supreme imaginative pride. The religious quarrel made in its beginnings comparatively slight stir in England, where the Reformation was at first mainly a consequence of royal caprice, and the Church remained Catholic in temper and even in doctrine, until political difference split the land into Puritan and Cavalier. England parted regretfully from the old religion, and slid casually into the new compromises of the "Anglican" Church, disliking equally the intolerances of Mary and of Elizabeth. Cromwell was only a violent interruption. This does not mean that sincere religious verse was not written on both sides, or before there were sides. It was written in all countries during the Renaissance, which everywhere had its hallowed moods. Somebody possessed a vine-wreathed cross "supported by silver-gilt satyrs." It was an admirable symbol of the period.

Altogether the story of the Renaissance in England is a most difficult subject. Chronologically it is elastic; politically it is baffling; and in its infinite diversities can be described only in volumes. England is a nation of individualists in the matter of artistic expression. In other countries, for example, a poet or other artist usually expresses racial characteristics raised to the highest degree, rarefied and intensified. An English artist of any kind generally manifests entirely personal and non-racial genius. Chaucer is probably the most English of poets. Shakespeare is of all countries, as of all time, though

the English language, since Greek was no longer a living literary tongue, was his only possible medium.

In many ways England accepted the Renaissance contagion in a franker, gayer, more candid fashion than any of the other countries. Though she was associated more closely than usual with the politics of Europe, her narrow seas yet separated her away from the strange commotion she felt afar, and which a kind of natural wonder and cheerfulness made her take, as she takes most foreign commotions, with a bright and happy interest in matters a little remote. That something innocent and ingenuous at best, that something stupid at worst, which turns English history into a problem at once admirable and maddening, interweaves with the foreign influences in a curious warp and woof.

Some of the most complicated people of the Renaissance type appear in England. But the spirit of the time expresses itself primarily in a more spontaneous form than in other countries, with a great zest for adventure and with a riotous outbreak of lyrical singing. The young men censured quite early in the day, by the severe Roger Ascham, are "Italianate" with an amusing swagger, like children imitating their elders. They became aware that all the sirens were singing on the shores of Italy, since again on the waters had been seen the phantom sails of Greece. By the time they got there, perhaps, the gleaming sails had gone down again; but the sirens were singing still. To the wonder and crudity of adolescent England, Italy smiled a delight heightened by an exciting sense of sin.

Elizabethans take their period as a wild adventure, and very naturally say so, in lyric, in romance, and more

haltingly, though more magnificently, in drama. The fortunately-born appreciated the spirit of the age as a nobler fashion in literature, a greater grace of manner, and as a definitely mundane and urbane kind of architecture, less reckless, less intriguing, but more kindly, than that of the châteaux of France. Italian masons had come early to enrich some mansions, but the half-timbered Elizabethan house, built so much of fair glass oriels and carved woodwork, with its important mullions and gables and freakish chimney-stacks, its galleries and halls, its panelling and immense fireplaces, its gallant stairways, with heraldic beasts on the newels, its periphery of formal gardens and orchards, sundials, fountains, fish-ponds, bowling-greens and gatehouses, had an amity and intimacy unknown to foreign architecture. The new colleges also rose in their softened sweetness, kin to the mild moist air of the country. Gothic pillars in chapel and palace unclosed into the happy effect of fan-vaulting, with a peculiar radiance and ease. Some of the great houses were like little villages, as the châteaux were like ordered towns—places like Haddon Hall, Hardwicke Hall, Penshurst, Hatfield, Knole Park, Audley End, Hampton Court, and the varied vanished palace of Nonsuch. The Manor of the Vine in Hampshire with its Rouen glass, English woodwork, Florentine door, and garden studio, seems in retrospect an amicable place indeed. With innovators like Inigo Jones came the hardened "Palladian" ideal, though he touched it with an airy grace. And many of the seventeenth century houses are marvels of pleasantry.

Sculpture was not an art to flourish in Renaissance England. Flemish hands rather heavily brought new orna-

ment to the alabaster tombs, and, though Italian workers came and went, and even the violent Torrigiano came with his bravura, a depression vitiated their labours in the alien chilly land. English woodwork kept its charming indigenous tradition till the day when Grinling Gibbons altered its patterns of berried vines and roses to swags of prize vegetables. But sculpture and painting, perhaps more affected by the Puritan enmity than the literary art, took long to put on Renaissance manners in England; and the fair young men of the era, unlike the fair young men of Italy, could not be immortalised in imagery till Vandyke came to rescue the last of their insolent grace.

Italy herself made the very direct assault on the imagination of England, which yet surrendered to the Mediterranean influence in a triplicate form, for France, if dangerous, remained a "sweet enemy," and Spain, whether friendly or hostile, communicated its darker, more persistently mediæval strain of Latinity. Not at first did England take Italy with great intelligence. It was the land of the devil Machiavel, carrying his black book of gramaraye. But it was seducing and dramatic, and stirred the spirit to adventure.

So far as direct adventure went, there were national episodes in the daring piracies of the high seas, in the great duel with Spanish power. The Elizabethan captains might be buccaneers; the Spanish exploitation of the New World was a most deadly and deliberate lust for gold. Some absolute love of the "bright eyes of danger" redeemed most of the Elizabethan explorers. "America" really meant more to the Elizabethan Englishman than to other invaders. Later on, a great Renaissance poet was

to use the word whimsically in an emotional sense, probably never attached to it in verse at any other time.

As to individual adventure, Elizabethan gentlemen, much influenced by Hoby's translation of Castiglione's book, were people like Pembroke, Raleigh, Essex, Southampton, Sidney. Sir Philip Sidney, dead at thirty-two, was the Perfect Courtier without the Perfect Prince, engaging, sincere, gracious, beautiful—poet, soldier and cavalier, lover and friend. In 1572 he was in Venice; two years later he met Don Juan of Austria at Louvain—chivalric rencontre. His noble life and lovely death are in themselves a poem; and in *Astrophel and Stella* he carried the English sonnet heavenward on soaring pinions of verse. The triumphal cadences both here and in other lyrics are the pulses of a justifiable personal pride. His *Arcadia*, dreamily wandering as it is, has its place in English romance, and his *Defense of Poesie*, wilful as its argument may seem at times, in the beginnings of written criticism.

All the "Italianate" young men, naturally, were not so chaste and wise as Sidney. They went to the courts of Italy and France, and learnt to hang a bright gem from their ears, to wear a rose with a difference, to touch a lute in a more ravishing mode, to match sonnets for remote ladies and fair young friends. They kissed and embraced and fought and lost their delightful heads, and made great phrases. For the Public School tradition, fortunately, was not yet begun.

The most evident expression of the newly impassioned temper was a kind of lyric rapture, unparalleled at any other period of English literary history. This takes a dual form. From the days of Wyatt and Surrey the Italianate

influences lengthen, enrich and elaborate the English metres, now become too thin and weary, except in rare instances, for the more reflective poets. The sonnet comes into its own, ranging through musicians like Sidney, Shakespeare and Drayton; and beauty moves regally modulated through the *Prothalamia* of Spenser, and his own peculiarly Italianate stanzas, (though there is Puritan vitriol in his flowing honey) till the more intricate music seems to culminate, so differently, in the reconciling harmonies of *Lycidas*, and the bitterly clashing and piercing music of Donne. But the more definite genius of Elizabethan song is simpler. Its spontaneity and variety of lyric speech are unequalled. Sown liberally through song-book, romance, and drama, like a largess of seed-pearl, these snatches still astonish the student belonging to an age that has disdained rhythm and rime. The mediæval fountain of the English song, stifled, not exhausted, through the long civil wars, asserted its latent vitality through the smoother Renaissance lyricism, scattering it with may-dews and petals. It is as if Apollo had ordained a startling special creation of singing birds. With sudden openings and sweet surprises of cadences, rise up these birth-songs, love-songs, flower-songs, wedding-songs, and dirges. For every singer enjoyed the moment when he said:

"Leave me, O Love which reachest but to dust!"

after he had thoroughly exhausted anterior themes; and even from death wrung pleasure, music, and romance.

"Is't not fine to dance and sing
While the bells of death do ring?"

And it is in such fresh and fragrant roundelays, all violets, daffodils, and roses, all sighing sweetly for fair perishing things, that a note not frequently overheard during the Renaissance period is most audible, the note of mere exquisite tenderness.

With all this verbal chiming is mingled an enchanting music of strings, for these lyrics were most tunable; this was a case where music might easily with "sweet poetry agree." So the masters of every kind of lute and viol, like Dowland and Campion, wrote their tablature. The words of true Elizabethan song carry their air to the inmost ear as they are read, even in silent libraries. They are not like the complicated lyric of later times, where the verbal music is so harmonised and perfected that it seems wrong to superimpose another pattern of sound. They are real melodies, crying for sister-music. This gift of spontaneous song lasted long in the land. Even the Restoration rakes recovered either a divine innocence or a divine insolence in their lyric moments. Even the reason of the eighteenth century could in its opening years sing a song now and then. But the wonderful verbal harmonies of the great Romantics (though some of Shelley is melody pure and simple) put a definite estrangement between poets and musicians, who now, with one or two exceptions, must search for their words in folk-lore or in the older literature.

Of all Elizabethan singers one might specially linger on the name of Dr. Thomas Campion, because he differs, not so much in kind as in intensity, as the pulsing of the Pleiads seizes the eye in a starspilt heaven. Physician, poet, music-maker, he does also differ delicately in kind, though he be as "sudden" in his openings as any. The

Elizabethan song, on the whole, is a matter of pure sound, colour-effects being reserved for other manifestations. But Campion has an ethereal way of sounding faint music and faint colours, of striking, if one may say it, colour-effusing chords. His lyrics are sometimes evocations where white figures are seen through dim clouds of rose and fainter gold. After all, he was a master of masque-music, where "loving lightes" might appear.

He "chiefly aymed to couple his words and notes lovingly together." To read Campion is to see a panelled room hung here and there with faint reds and emeralds, the pale golden, glitteringly obdurate lady of Elizabethan phantasy seated in her high chair, robed in changeable taffetas, braided and girdled with chains of pearl, at her feet a fanciful Euphuistic lover, most "Italianate," singing to his lute:

"Followe thy faire sunne, unhappy shadowe."

But sometimes Campion seems lost in a unique world of unearthly sorrow, all images of burning tapers, strewn flowers, ebbing music, flickering shadows, flying lights, extremities of suppliance and swooning cadences, where, to the melancholy sound of Lydian flutes, with strange sound of lamentation rise the ghostly lovers of antiquity.

"When thou must home to shades of underground ——"

He has appealing ironies, too; and a kind of wasting intensity sometimes:

"Pale looks hath many friends
By sacred sweetness bred."

These Elizabethans desired to behold their coloured lives lifted to immortal states in the drama, so a great

and unequal drama they had. Unequal, for the dramatic form was still imperfectly evolved from the larvæ-forms of miracle play, interlude, and chronicle; and the new dramatists were too much engrossed in their stories, their characters, and their poetry to consider stagecraft very seriously, especially since it was the characterisation and the poetry of the play, sometimes the rude mirth of it, that the audience really wanted. Even Shakespeare is often too much concerned with his people, and what his people say, to be a perfect playwright, though, when he is played without indecent "cutting"—with the leisureliness his own time permitted—he is a better playwright than it is the fashion to suppose. And if the unsympathetic characters frequently utter amazing verse fit for heroes, it is to be remembered that in the days of Elizabethan English, when people evidently spoke as well as wrote poetry without knowing it, both villains and fools might say remarkable things without violating dramatic fitness.

Still, the drama loosely termed Elizabethan, though *magnifique*, is hardly *la guerre* from the modern stage-manager's point of view. It is incoherent poetry. It is often unshapely and grotesque, though hardly ever without swift pages of sword-like sweetness, cries of the naked soul like nothing else save those that sometimes happen in the ballads of Scotland. Apart from Shakespeare's, most of the plays are memorable chiefly for vivid scenes, tragically fascinating figures, lightning speeches, as if gods or devils had spoken in the darkness. The themes are predominantly Italian. The dramatists loved the unusual motives, the sweet foreign names, the stories with the symbolic note set in magical places called Milan,

Florence, Naples, Venice, Sicily, Verona, Padua, Rome. They liked to see their figures, enchanting or ominous, or both, in some perspective, set in clear golden air, doing forbidden things. For a time, indeed, some of the dramas are like gilded mystery-plays, with Machiavel and the Aretine supporting the scene on either side like Iniquities in the old moralities. The very freshness of heart which was typically English confessed itself in this strong sense of the forbidden. Other Renaissance countries did not feel very guilty concerning the forbidden. But England preferred to set its drama of curious love and hate in Italy, partly because it seemed dangerous to permit a home setting, partly, of course, because the decorative imagination gained from the Italian scene. The Triumph of Love, the Triumph of Glory, the Triumph of Death, all passed in a great Italian palace garden, the Garden of Armida, beautifully enchanted, regretfully destroyed. Even Spenser, by temperament so Italianate, secretly enamoured of his tender witch Acrasia, sighs over that sad overthrow—as well he might, the supreme poet of purely sensuous impressions, craving really to convey the "magnanimity" of the Perfect Courtier in his long poem, though his hoarded manna became acrid and corrupted by a defect of spirit which made him Puritan and parasite.

Sometimes, of course, the setting was English, for comedy, or for domestic tragedy where the moral was very plain. Not when the splendid destroyer came to splendid disaster! Not when she cries—

> "My soul like to a ship in a black storm
> Is driven, I know not whither."

Christopher Marlowe is early a typically Renaissance dramatist. He expresses continually that desire for the impossible which made many Renaissance folk rush brilliantly to perdition. Any Elizabethan dramatist will voice it for you, even the kindly Peele:

"To joy her love I'll build a kingly bower
Seated in hearing of a hundred streams."

Even the more heavily moving Ben Jonson can translate it in Sir Epicure Mammon. It is in Shakespeare's tragic protagonists with their lunacies of love, hate, power; even more perhaps in the disappointed ironical tenderness of a Prospero. But Marlowe most frequently and frankly expresses the intolerable stress of immoderate longing. He was sufficiently like a figure in one of his own plays, famous as a sceptic, a violent antagonist, early done to death in a tavern quarrel. He is his own Faustus, his own Edward, his own Tamburlaine,

"Still climbing after knowledge infinite."

A perfect Renaissance line! The famous passage that begins:

"If all the pens that ever poets held"

aches with the same impossible frenzy of desire for something just evading the human capacity. His dramatic psychology as a whole is childlike and unequal; but blinding flashes of revelation atone for that impatience of the artist. All his longings are Italianate:

"Therefore I'll have Italian masques by day," etc.

His Dr. Faustus is his highest achievement, as it is his most sympathetic.

" 'Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me,"

says Faustus. His dreams are of strange heathen felicity, his extreme desire the possession of Helen of Troy. And Mephistopheles is there, with cold Renaissance truth:

"Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it."

The Epilogue has the Renaissance regret, a kind of dreaming sweetness:

"Now broken is the branch that grew full straight
And burnèd is Apollo's Golden bough."

Marlowe is a towering poet, but Shakespeare is one of the greatest Renaissance figures. Here we are concerned with him only as an expression of his period. He is *l'uomo universale* indeed, as Leonardo was in Italy, the one inclined to plastic works, the other to purely imaginative art, both deeply concerned with all the problems of existence, and arriving at some æsthetic synthesis of experiences intellectual and emotional. According to tradition he had something even of Leonardo's suave ambiguity of manner, as he moved among that vibrating crowd of Italianate lords, Mermaid wits, and girlish boy-actors.

He found his stories north and south, and altered them to his will; but Italy and Italianate matters dye his drama most deeply. Even when his theme is Celtic, the history resembles an Italian chronicle, and Lady Macbeth is like one of those decisive, indifferent Italian ladies who regard

a necessary murder as a matter of policy. Only, Shakespeare is sensitive to the Celtic note of sweetness and spirituality. Lady Macbeth breaks down, as no Italian lady would have done in her place.

His villains are Italian villains, rarely without their qualities. Edmund in *King Lear* is allowed some speeches packed with Italian Renaissance pride—his great boast of being a love-child, for example. His girls are Renaissance youths, and do "have a doublet and hose in their composition." His great success in woman-portraiture, apart from Lady Macbeth and from Juliet, who, like her Romeo, is merely the spirit of youth incarnate, is Cleopatra, a Renaissance type enough, and evidently a portrait. His men are Renaissance super-heroes yearning for some "immortal garland" of pride or love or power, slain by the ironies created in the conflict between their desires and destiny, refusing a hateful world with a violent gesture like Hamlet, or accepting a "happy ending," with a strange effect of secret disillusionment. Only Romeo and Juliet have the perfect conclusion, "for ever young and still to be enjoyed." *Troilus and Cressida* may be Shakespeare's most bitter play; *The Tempest*, whatever the benign old critics say, is the saddest.

And the Shakespeare of the incomparable Sonnets, where the Dark Lady leans to her virginals and the young man coloured like the May gazes with more enchanting eyes, has the most Renaissance aspect of all.

At this time of day, when our language seems to be lapsing into some helpless slang-patois, it is as well to meditate Shakespearean speech a little. Elizabethan English is a vehicle of astonishing strength and beauty, so

that any quiet translator like Adlington seems to work miracles. (Of course the Elizabethans were aware of their language; the Euphuists even played amusing tricks with it. At all times the state of the language has told the true values of the national intelligence.) But Shakespeare wreaked on his medium of expression such violences and subtleties of the imaginative reason and of emotional logic that by cadence and imagery he carried intention into language farther than ever it had gone before—except in the problematical case of Sappho, whose range, after all, was limited. Whether he gain his end by tangled knots of metaphor or by the clear violin-like music of the Sonnets is immaterial to him. Whether he use the technical terms of the physician, the lawyer, or the chemist is indifferent; he dips them in the crimson vat of his emotion, and they are new. What cadence could be distilled from English prose, audible already in the translators, was to become a rumour of splendour later on, perfection becoming intimately and piercingly beautiful in the English Bible. This was Renaissance English, the purple strand of its Latinity revived by the New Learning.

Other great dramatists spoke startlingly of their visions of Italy. Remember Webster's rare Italian women, far more emotional and royal than the heroines of the real stories. The lady who said she was "Duchess of Malfi still," to be quickly told, "That makes thy sleep so broken," moves with music to her doom. Only an English imagination brooding tenderly over a story of Italian intrigue could have made this lady. Says her waiting-maid:

"Whether the spirit of greatness or of woman
Reign most in her I know not; but it shows
A fearful madness. I owe her much of pity."

Says she herself:

"My laurel is all withered."

Also:

"Oh! but you must
Remember my curse hath a long way to go."

Says her husband:

"And on the sudden a clear light
Presented me a face folded in sorrow."

What her brother says is too often quoted. His fellow-murderer, the curious cynical Bosolo, really Italian in type, calls at the end, concerning his soul:

"Return, fair saint, from darkness and lead mine
Out of this sensible hell."

Webster's Vittoria Corrombona is at once better and worse than the real White Devil; she is more imaginatively consistent and courageous. Ford, again, is lured by the Italian legend. His Annabella is a fine study in reasoning passion; she should have appealed to Shelley, another lover of Italy. There are others—Massinger, Middleton, Beaumont and Fletcher, and so on. I have named the most Italianate. From innumerable Elizabethan plays one gets a strong impression that the characters have been wrecked by unexpected glimpses of eternity.

Of narrative poets like Spenser a little has been said

already. Certainly but for Italy we would never have had his wonderful, almost over-sweet stanza, nor his dreamy processionals, his groups too like a ripe Correggio, nor his more captivating and more virginal figures.

For many enthusiasts English poetry rises to its most amazing climaxes in the Jacobean and Caroline poets loosely termed "metaphysical," who mass their triumphant harmonies around themes already sounded in Shakespeare's greatest sonnets, and in the mysterious rapture of *The Phoenix and the Turtle.* Marvel, Crashaw, Vaughan, Cowley, and Donne, explore enormous ranges and startling borderlands of psychological matter never before or after so surely penetrated by the winged and fiery feet of the lyrical genius of English verse. Never before or since, as in poems like Donne's "Ecstasie," have intellectual and emotional elements been so nobly in unison, has that idealism masculine and tender, that imaginative anger against all spiritual cowardice, so ravished, as with flying flames and easy arrogant plumes of language, the soul of immortal delight and pain from the rose of mortal pain and delight. Here is no space to pursue Renaissance English verse to its conclusions, courtly and devotional. Donne and Milton, however, demand some more definite attention for their Renaissance characteristics, the one for the spiritual freedom with which he swept new states of experience within his exciting and disintegrating music, the other for the decorative vision and the classic perfection of his verbal technique.

John Donne, whose period is divided between the reigns of Elizabeth and of James, is the kind of poet who will for ever have his fanatics, and fanatics jealous even

of each other. It is not, however, his peculiar qualities that are now in question, but his qualities as a Renaissance poet. Outwardly he often seems recusant to the spirit of the period, essaying dissonances in his verse, appearing to mock serious themes with wildly capricious similes. At heart he is one of the truest children of the Renaissance, for he is a metaphysician in everything, above all in love. The Renaissance people were curious in all matters, but most curious about the Dream behind all appearances.

Donne was extremely Latin in temper, with an ancestry of Catholic martyrs—antique Latin one would like to say, with some dim remembrance of one side of Catullus. He had experienced Spain as well as Italy. The true Renaissance dualism cleft him through and through—cleft perhaps, where, in others, it interwed. He was mediæval and modern, he was schoolman and scholar, he was lover and hater, he was mystic and materialist, he was a courtier and a reluctant priest, he was the apologist of suicide, and died as the Dean of St Paul's. He had the Renaissance rage of curiosity and its rapture of regret, he was over-passionate and over-reasoning, he was macabre and scientific, he was realist and idealist. Wrath and sweetness contend in his love, so that he conveys better than any poet the kind of sadism, the *Odi et amo* note, of Renaissance frenzy. With his strange satiric code of language, he dissects as with fine steel the crimson throbbing matter of the heart. Surrey and Wyatt had sounded with their new metres a new intimacy of lyric expression. Sidney and Shakespeare had, amongst others, carried it far. Donne, with his singular blend of cynicism and passion, seems to subject the secret soul to absolute

violation. With ironies already too much aware, with slow intolerable pressure, he compels the consciousness to divulge its secrets, as flowers yield their fragrance in the still.

He was love's recreant and love's idolator. He will know what angels (or devils either) desire in vain to look into. He was love's idolator and love's iconoclast, but always love's casuist. As he pleased he could make of sex the most holy or the most obscene gesture of passion. He wrote the *Apparition*, and he wrote *The Ecstasie*. Many other astonishing poems he made, but all lie between these. With his unique refusals of easy sweetness, his piercing aberrations of cadence, his exquisitely relieving moments of sharply pitiful music, his implications of irony with passion, he was indeed "the first poet in the world for some things." He is the greatest love-poet in the language, except perhaps the Shakespeare of the Sonnets. I forget none of the great love-poets.

Sincerely devotional as he tried to be in the final phase, there lingers about him something unexorcised, as if Pagan incense were burning in a Christian crypt. He might become a priest; he still was a thief of souls. He remains in the mind as one excommunicate but irresistible, like an alchemist working forbidden things in the crucibles of song, while in the dim smoke around him are the fascinated faces of phantasmal women, the one or the other quickening according to the magic chords of sudden evocative music, strangely sweet or terrible or harsh, but always unique, and conclusive, and overpowering.

The more famous poet who, in his own great manner, closes the Renaissance period, needs less attention here

because, curiously enough, in this great Puritan the Renaissance characteristics are so obvious. The delicate scholar who travelled in Italy in his youth, and wrote sonnets for Diodati, who made himself a monk of Apollo at Horton, never lost the learning and "magnificence" of the era to which he belonged. (Yet it was deep in the seventeenth century before the young Milton conversed in the Academies of Florence, and enjoyed the music and cardinals of Rome.) By one of Time's kinder revenges, the poetic art of this fierce controversialist reconciles as many qualities as the Dome of St Peter's was dreamed to do.

Even in the Nativity Ode

"The parting genius is with sighing sent."

In *Lycidas*, that miracle of smooth yet subtle music, gods and angels and nymphs mingle as happily as the dream-flowers brought for the beautiful drowned youth, much as they annoyed Dr. Johnson, who did not realise the Renaissance. And in the masque of *Comus*, the poetry, as poetry, is perfection itself in the invocation of Sabrina. Milton had the myth-making power; and in even richness of technique he is the Velasquez of poets, much as his matter differs from that of the great painter. But it seems as if an attuned ear may glide with infinite satisfaction over the fabric of vowelling and the musical notation of Milton, irrespective even of his mighty intent, just as sensitive fingers long to feel the cunning paint of the Spanish master.

The lovely early period ended; and long years of scolding controversy, broken again and again by sudden interventions of his genius in great passages of rhythmic

prose, had to pass before he dauntlessly began *Paradise Lost*, the only English epic. He is Renaissance still, though the delicate dewy beauty of the early period is irrevocably gone. But the dark infernal pride of personality informs all the really superb and impassioned part of the poem, even as it builds the towering paragraphs of his inimitable blank verse. If *Paradise Regained* strikes somewhat bleak and cold, it is rather in the "petrified" Renaissance manner, and he does not forget "Athens, the eye of Greece." Even *Samson Agonistes* is classical in form, and, if the subject be Hebraic, Renaissance scholars did not neglect the Hebraic element.

I have not over-emphasised literature as the predominant expression of the English Renaissance. Indeed it has been difficult, and seems discourteous to avoid so many attractive names. One can select only the most significant. Of the masque-makers, translators, scholars, romance-makers, and the first uncertain journalists, it is possible merely to say that they were many, and that none was without vitality of his own. One is still more reluctant to leave untouched the later Renaissance effect on the Cavalier and the devotional poets, and on solitary though extremely unlike personalities like those of Herrick and Marvell. But the imaginative sense of the Renaissance did perish while a death-cold tradition lingered in architecture and in literature to belie the name of the great period. The pillared dwellings and the correct couplets of the "Augustan" age were wrought by people with a severe conviction that they were modelling themselves on classic perfection and restraint. The true Renaissance folk took their Greeks and Latins as live creatures and practised restraint too little, I fear. Well! The Renaissance

children of fame, though interested in madness, were not given to personal insanity nearly so much as the "Augustans," who should afford an interesting study to the modern psychologist.

V

Renaissance effects in the remaining countries of Europe are more belated, for there the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, with their dreadful sequels of religious war, struck home before the real Revival of Art and Letters had begun to work. Spain, always remote and difficult, persisted long in the mediæval temper, isolated by its mountain-ranges as by seas, affected by its "Gothic" and Moorish invasions—aloof, insolent, at once chivalrous and cruel, distinctly Byzantine in its courtly etiquette, sombre and fine in a fainéant way, limited and intense, the frigid enemy of the excessive Italies, the casual plunderer of the New World, the gorgeous bigot of the Catholic faith, still keeping her sacred dancers for the Easter altar. Spain, in her self-sufficiency, hardly gave a liberal welcome to the New Humanism. There was some civil acknowledgment. Isabel of Aragon had at her court her Academy from Italy. But it was unlikely to flourish in a land where an *auto-da-fé* had become a real cold-blooded pleasure. As time passed, however, she was to find the sleeping germ of the Renaissance stir strangely in her literature, working through picaresque story and coloured drama, till it found a climax in the most mocking and most tender book of the liberating Cervantes, even while her saints still spoke of agony and bridal in terms of terrifying mys-

ticism. Her faith in her religion also became expressive in her painting, in the writhen limbs and strange hues of the Greek El Greco, who had studied in Italy, the tragic monks of Zurbaran, the awful moments arrested by Ribera, the sentimentally-melting, the honeyed compensations of Murillo, with his operatic Assumptions approved by Jesuitism, while the belated Velasquez was to spend most of his matchless technique in unmasking the arrogance and secret misery of the Court of Philip IV. Until his advent, the flame and the frigidity of the Spanish temper equally disturbed the luminous patterns of true Renaissance art. Altogether, Spanish painting in its subject-matter is an almost intolerable statement of the Church of the sincere Loyola on the one hand, or an almost openly cynical derision of the Court aristocracy on the other. For, in the incomparable texture of Velasquez survive all the glory and vanity of the Spanish Court, and all the melancholy behind it—in those figures of pathos and pomp, arrogant Infantas, frustrate queens, dreaming of alien things in their monstrous jewelled attire, morbid over-excited children, unnaturally wives and mothers, little princes in sorry splendour, warriors and diplomatists without scruple, dwarves and fools, all the dwellers in the House of Pride and its *oubliettes.* It is not often he can escape to spaces, distances, masses, and free gestures, to the poses of the girls in *Las Hilanderas*, the lances against the sky in the *Surrender of Breda.* He groups his figures in such poignant relation to light and space that they become timeless patterns, and he substantiates them with a painting whose apprehension gives ineffable pleasure to all painters.

The Gothic and the Moorish influences persisted long

in Spain's architecture, with a bizarre and heady effect. From the flamboyance of Moorish Gothic Spain seemed to pass easily to the flamboyance of the Baroque, a style which, under the pressure of the Spanish paradox of fire and ice, a religion that could shape both a Santa Teresa and a Torquemada, acquired a sincerity and a sombre excitement it lacked in any other country. When the Renaissance influence did make itself felt, it seemed overflown: Spain's inclination was to overdo what it did accept. It was so incommunicative that any expression inclined to become revulsion—something sensational, excessive in ornament. But at places like Miraflores and Burgos the fusion of Moorish, Gothic, and Italian motifs flames out in dazzling efflorescences, while the Franco-Flemish influences in sculpture are concentrated by the Spanish intensity into great iconostases and impressive tombs, with rigid and splendid figures. Spain had its music too. And now and then a real Renaissance personality broke through, like the reckless, royal Don Juan of Austria. His name reminds one that Spain has created even the mythical fanatic of pleasure.

This fierce fanatical country had for king at a critical moment the Holy Roman Emperor. Charles V is at once a devout Catholic and no lover of the popes, dreaming sometimes of being Pontifex Maximus himself, vexed by the desire for a Holy War against the Turk. It is easy enough to depreciate this rather unpicturesque figure, overloaded with territorial responsibilities, sincere in his way, achieving a difficult tolerance. If Luther, and the Lutheran princes who used him for their puppet, had done as much, if the papal power had not been vested in a creature so weak and vacillating as the Medicean

Clement, Europe might have been saved a long nightmare, those delicate and gentle spirits endeavouring to reform the Church from within might not have been untimely crushed, the Sack of Rome might have been averted, the panic of the Counter-Reformation might not have distorted in Ignatius Loyola, and allowed an Inquisition, long detested by the Church, to triumph at last, against the long reluctance of Christendom, over those "delivered unto Satan"—and history might have taken a different course.

VI

The power of reactionary Spain has much to do with the fact that the Renaissance of Letters never brought its first fine careless rapture to the Low Countries, or the Austrian and German Territories, for all these were linked by an Emperor who was also a Spanish king. The artists might exchange their secrets of technique; the scholars, eager for intellectual freedom, were inclined, often mistakenly, to cast in their lot with the Reformers. There was little true Hellenism in these regions: and, where Protestantism stirred, the Renaissance pride in the human body hastily retreated.

The Low Countries, with Bruges for their northern Venice, were then the mart for the luxuries of Europe. The Spanish graces of the Suzerain contrasted strangely and often furiously with the native independence and energy. Those flat and soothing stretches of meadow and water seemed to provide a field for human embroideries; and both life and art had long been conducted with a kind of passionate patience, blood-red knots of death

suddenly tied around about the belfries now and then. They kept their democratic ideals, these territories, with a steady gaze on the pretensions of the Emperor, Austrian or Spaniard. The Renaissance did bring a new vitality to their arts, and the beautiful houses of the period, like those by the water in Ghent, where Gothic and Renaissance intermarry, were enriched in every way by delicately carved, chiselled, patterned, and graven objects of use and ornament. Sanity, serenity, sumptuousness, inhabited their painting, that painting of the Flemish Primitives, like "one faint eternal eventide of gems." Their artists had knowledge to give, as well as to take. They had made their reconciliations already, in their Memlincs and Van Eycks, who achieve such a quiet union of mystic with material things, of a religious faith with the fairy tale element, such a great illumination and consecration of the mundane, whose gems and fabrics seem the precious phrases of an emotional language:

"Wheresoe'er thou look
The light is starred in gems and the gold burns."

Roger van der Weyden, Petrus Cristus, Hugo van der Goes, maintain the pure tradition. Gerard David has an exotic note. Quentin Matsys knows a Lombard grace; and Jehan de Maubeuge is heavily Italian.

Sometimes the Italian sweetness and subtlety slide in quietly. Sometimes, usually by some freak of ecclesiastical or royal fancy, it breaks out the more wildly because of its Northern environment, as in the gorgeous inner rose-robe of shy St Anne's in Bruges, where seraph and harpy, bishop, nymph, and volute revel over chancel-screen and panelled stalls, or in the overbearing fireplace in the

Palais du Franc, made for Charles V, a carnival of emperors, ribboned scrolls, crowns, trophies, medallions, eagles, globes and sceptres, genii, collars of the Golden Fleece—what you will, florid and unconvincing, a puzzled Imperial effort towards an Italian manner.

But the Low Countries in the relief of their separation were to know fresh discoveries and changes in art—a Rubens with immense energy casting his exuberant and contorted figures into compositions, etc., compositions of too violent vitality, a Rembrandt making a deathless masterpiece out of the head of an old woman, or anything else he chose to draw or paint, and deftly skilled painters of landscape and quiet interiors. The engravers and etchers too were very busy in these lands. All of them—Rubens, Rembrandt, Vandyke, continued to come to full comprehension of their own powers only after the traditional journey to Italy, resigned and fallen Italy.

The Low Countries, moreover, bred a great European scholar, whose melancholy fate it was to be involved in disputes for which he had no liking, for Erasmus was a true lover of freedom of thought. The ignorance of most Northern monkery he hated and mocked; he had bitter cause before his end to know the intolerance of Lutherans, so eager for "wealth and wives"; he was a great disseminator of ideas, not merely by his witty books, but by personal communication, for he did not shrink from travel, and all the great humanists of the time were his friends. But though so reasonable, charming, and pleasing in appearance, though so skilled in the humanities, though a pioneer in biblical and patristic study, Erasmus remains a somewhat pensive figure, hardly attracting the imaginative sympathy he deserves. The position of the

"moderate," though admirable, rarely kindles enthusiasm. To capture the attention of humanity it is necessary to be definitely for or against some ideal. He was not a fiery spirit; but his value as a carrier of humanist notions and learning throughout Europe, as a steadfast believer in tolerance, can hardly be exaggerated.

VII

It seems the destiny of German peoples to conclude every brilliant period of civilisation; and, partly by the unreasoning "Reformation," partly by the sheer brutality of their armies, they gagged, bound, and slowly put to death the Spirit of the Renaissance. There was no real revival of the arts or of the New Learning in the German countries. Before the New Spirit could penetrate the different states, "Protestantism" was awake to discourage its audacities. The German princes were gross; the German scholars were intellectual mercenaries. Isolated and remarkable artists like Albrecht Dürer, or the monumental portraitist Hans Holbein, felt the new spirit indeed, and did authoritative work. Most of them found some contact with Milan and Venice, especially Dürer, who is greater in engraving than in painting. He has actually drawn the dying despairing soul of the period in his *Melancholia.* Martin Schöngauer, Grünewald, Albrecht Altdorfer, with his dramatic skies and peculiar imaginative note, Lucas Cranach, painter of ivory nudities of a toylike kind, are among the singular, even eccentric painters of the time. Sometimes the architecture showed an exaggerated effort in the new manner, as in the picturesque façade of Heidelberg Castle. There are builders' evi-

dences also in cities already "Romanesque," like Cologne, Nürnberg, Hildesheim, and luxurious Augsburg. The tomb of Maximilian at Innsbruck is a famous monument to a composite Emperor who had some Renaissance elements mixed in his confused and adventurous personality. But poverty was his bane. His Triumph was executed in engraving, and the great tomb was never complete. Woodcuts were greatly in vogue. There were metal-masters like Peter Vischer, and sculptors in wood like Adam Kraff and Veit Stoss. Maximilian reorganised the University of Vienna, and Freiburg was a college of poets and mathematicians. Some people like Wilibeth Pirkheimer combined scholarship with luxury and irony. But the monasteries were dens of ignorance, the princes were chiefly boors, and the scholars were compelled by circumstance to become mere freelances of controversy, like Ulrich von Hutten. The humanist Bebel is a queer example of a Teutonic pagan. Perhaps a popular Luther was the only possible reply to a popular Tetzel. The favour of the princes made him such an overwhelming reply.

Nevertheless Johann Reuchlin was a great scholar, generously minded. And Erasmus took part in the German controversy till he wearied of it.

Unfortunately, in what Pope Leo dismissed as "a monk's quarrel," great political issues were involved. Luther was never in any danger or glory of martyrdom, for, besides being the apostle of the "average sensual man," he was most powerfully supported by the princes, who found him useful, as an argument, not only against Catholic Emperor and Pagan Pope, but against those mis-

guided peasants who, to their miserable undoing, believed him when he said that all men were equal in the grace of God. Luther could preach "obedience to authority" like the most bigoted priest, when it was to his convenience. The Anabaptist and the Zwinglist were recognised by him no more than the Catholic.

It is a mournful end for the Renaissance that all the great European Powers should disintegrate in furious religious strife, that Italy herself should lie like a slave, undone by Catholic and Protestant alike, shackled by Austrian, Spanish, Papal chains. Yet the great period literally passed in a swan-song, for all the troubled exhausted lands were becoming more definitely aware of what the art of music might be.

VIII

The Renaissance is dead, you say. Perhaps! But the spirit beat faintly still not so many years ago.

"Now at his last gasp Passion speechless lies."

And it may be even now:

"From death to life thou mightst him yet recover."

The sequels in Restoration England, in Austrian-ridden Italy, in the France of the Bourbons, all the graces become languid, the sensualities gone cold, the arts faintly corrupt, the longing for sensation frozen into a lust for cruelty, are stored in the historic mind. The great French Revolution and its consequences revived one standing Renaissance conflict, that between Brutus and Cæsar, the

Republican and the Imperial ideal. And both sides again had their martyrs, those who suffered in the Phrygian cap, and those members of an aristocracy that at least knew how to die. The Mediterranean civilisation keeps its culture and its tradition.

Since the Great War we have changed all that? Perhaps! It is not very obvious yet that we have done anything since then. We may have banished the immemorial music of Latin and the flowery-breathing sound of Greek from our colleges; we may have reduced our own literature to a kind of verbal epilepsy; our painting and sculpture to the vision of the caveman. Language is much more weary and less articulate than before the Renaissance. Civic life does not exist, except in committees. Expressions of vitality natural to livelier periods are drearily dissected in pathology books. We are very tired.

But the people murmur, for "there is no vision"; and the Phrygian cap may be seen again, some say shudderingly. Why not? It is wrong to confound the fool's cap with the cap of liberty. We are left without an aristocracy of either intellect or birth. The people must bring the Renaissance this time. The money-mad will not redeem us, nor the cliques of sham intellectuals. But the people hunger for fuller expression, for colour, song, music, dancing. They demand, as they have always demanded, bread and games. It is a good cry, too, for without bread the body cannot live, without some magnificence the spirit must die. They must have wine and bread. Blood, very likely! Wine merely symbolises the blood of a god in all the religions.

The Italian Renaissance happened because of a con-

senting people, a people consenting often to cruel tyrants because they were magnificent and beautiful in their way. Let the people create, even by agony, a new Renaissance, though it consent no more to cruel tyrants, remembering rather the powers and possibilities of their confraternities and their guilds.

Remember the prophecy of Joachim of Flora, merely uttered too soon. The Kingdom of the Father, the feudal spirit, is long passed. The Kingdom of the Son, of delegated authority, is now passing. The Kingdom of the Holy Ghost may really be beginning, for the Dove of the Spirit came to a daughter of the people. Do you say the older seer used the symbols of a dead theology? Religions are always obscurely true, and symbols are undying.

I apologise to you, my brothers and sisters, for writing a book about scholars, princes, artists, at a time when you are weary of these. My excuse is that I know your tears, your tragic gaiety, your passion for splendour, your angry refusal, so misunderstood by well-meaning bureaucrats, to do without romance. My justification is that you once made these people, and may do better next time. They were at least more tangible and more glorious than present oppressors. You wept over their dead beauty—you always mourn dead beauty.

And particularly I speak to the people of my own land—ironic, haughty, impassioned, paradoxical, accustomed to suffer, and to suffer with an air, land of lost causes and great enthusiasms, that always loves an ancient ballad and is tender to the poor scholar, where the intellectual fares out from the home of peasant and craftsman, where Italy and France yet linger secretly in the Gael, where sacrifice is a matter of course, though pride of per-

sonality is a generous and admirable madness, land of conflict and of reconciliation, made to be the dream-Republic that no liberty-loving heart will ever surrender.

Leading Dates

	A.D.
Invasion of Italy by Charles VIII	1494
Cesare Borgia married at Blois	1499
Diet of Worms	1521
Treaty of Madrid	1526
Francis I	1494-1547
Massacre of St. Bartholomew	1572
Diane de Poitiers	1499-1566
Clement Marot	1495-1544
Philibert de l'Orme	1518-1577
Jean Goujon	*c.* 1515-1572
Pierre Ronsard	1524-1585
Montaigne	1533-1592
Rabelais	*c.* 1495-1553
Mary of Scots	1542-1587
Elizabeth Tudor	1533-1603
Christopher Marlowe	1564-1593
Roger Ascham	1515-1568
Sir Philip Sidney	1554-1586
Lyly's *Euphues*	1579
The Invincible Armada	1588
Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus	*c.* 1589
Death of Spenser	1599
Shakespeare	1564-1616
Ben Jonson	1573-1637
John Donne	1573-1631
Milton	1608-1674
Ignatius Loyola	1491-1556
Erasmus	1467-1536
Reuchlin	1455-1522
Luther	1485-1546
Dürer	1471-1528
Holbein	1498-1543

The Renaissance Ferment

	A.D.
Cervantes	1547-1616
Velasquez	1599-1660
Rubens	1577-1640
Rembrandt	1606-1669
Columbus	*c.* 1446-1506
Copernicus	1473-1543
Galileo	1564-1642

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